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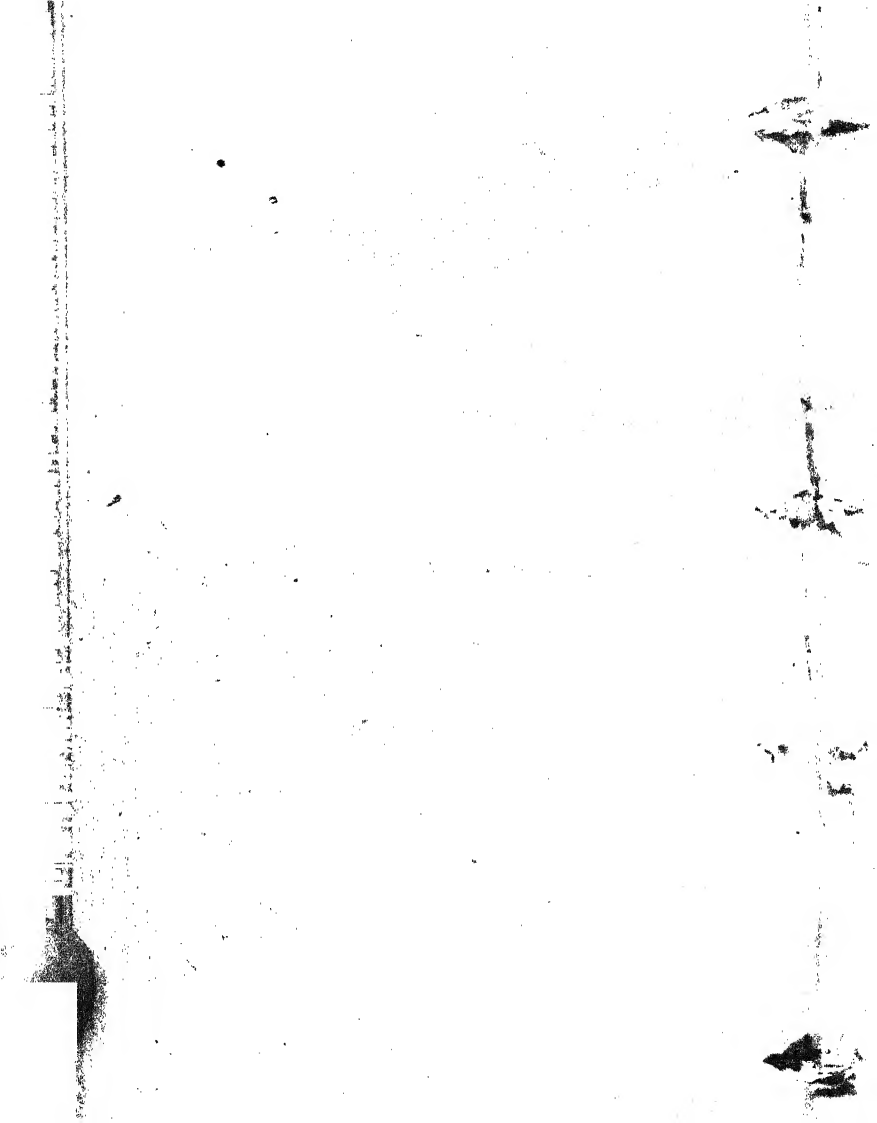
THE
WORKS
OF
VOLTAIRE.

VOL. XVII.

Being VOL. XIII. of his

PROSE WORKS.





THE
WORKS
OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Translated from the FRENCH.

WITH

Notes, Historical and Critical.

By T. SMOLLETT, M. D.

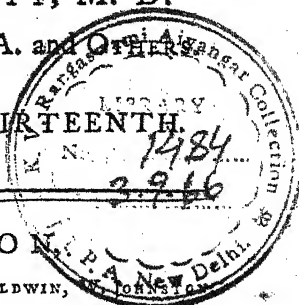
T. FRANCKLIN, M. A. and Others.

VOLUME THE THIRTEENTH.

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MISCELLANIES

I N

HISTORY, LITERATURE,
AND PHILOSOPHY.

OF CEREMONIES.

THE arm-chair, the easy-chair, the court-stool, the right and the left hand, have for several ages been considered as important objects of policy, and illustrious subjects for disputes. I fancy that the ancient ceremonial relating to arm-chairs, took its rise from our barbarous ancestors having but one of these chairs at most in a house, and that this was commonly appropriated to the use of any person who was sick. There are still several provinces in France, and counties in England, where the arm-chair is called a groaning-chair.

Long after the times of Attila and Dagobert, when luxury began to creep into courts, and that the great-ones of the earth had two or three arm-chairs in their mighty dungeons, it was esteemed a singular mark of distinction to sit on one of these thrones; and the master of a

B

castle

castile took care to have preserved among the records of his family, that having been to pay his court to such a count, he had been received by him in an arm-chair.

We may read in the Memoirs of Mademoiselle, sister to Lewis XIV. that this august princess passed at least a fourth part of her life in mortal agonies, occasioned by disputes about easy chairs; and a whole court was taken up in caballing whether it was proper to sit on a chair or a stool in such or such a room, or whether to sit at all. At present our manners are more uniform; and ladies make use indifferently of couches or sofas, without the peace of society being disturbed.

When cardinal Richelieu was negotiating the marriage between Henrietta of France and Charles I. of England, with the ambassador of that nation, the affair was on the point of being broken off, on account of two or three steps nearer to a door that was claimed by the ambassador, till the Cardinal, to get over the mighty difficulty, received him in bed; and this precious anecdote has been carefully preserved in history. I am of opinion, that, if it had been proposed to Scipio to place himself at his length naked between two sheets to receive Hannibal's visit, he would have thought it a droll ceremony.

One coach going before another, and what is called taking the way in a street or a road, has also been a mark of grandeur, and occasioned claims, disputes, and petty combats, for a whole century together; and it was esteemed a signal victory for the equipage of one person to oblige that of another to yield the way.

When

When foreign ambassadors passed through a street, it was like disputing the prize in a circus; and if a Spanish minister made a Portuguese coachman back his horses, he immediately dispatched a courier post-haste to Madrid, to inform the king his master of the advantage he had gained.

In proportion as a nation is more or less barbarous, or the court weak or powerful, these ceremonies are more or less in vogue. True power and real politeness despise ostentation.

It is probable that we shall one time or other see an end to the ridiculous custom which still prevails among the ambassadors of some courts, to beggar themselves for the sake of going in procession through the streets with a number of hired coaches, vamped up and new gilt, and preceded by a croud of servants walking on foot. This is called making their entry; and it is pleasant enough to hear of a person making his entry into a city seven or eight months after his arrival.

The important affair of the *punctilio*, which constitutes the grandeur of the modern Romans; the theory of the number of paces to be made in conducting a signor to the door at his departure; of opening a curtain half way, or altogether; of taking the right or left hand of a person in a room; this noble art, I say, which would never have entered the heads of a Fabius or a Cato, begins now to give way; and the train-bearers to the cardinals lament, with tears in their eyes, that every thing seems to denounce a general lapse of these essential ceremonials.

4 FOLLY ON BOTH SIDES.

A French colonel happening to be at Brussels about a year ago, and not knowing how to spend his time, proposed going to the public assembly; one of his acquaintance told him it was held at the house of a princess. With all my heart, replied the officer; but what of that? Why, princes go there. Are you a prince? Pish, man! said he, they are very good kind of princes: last year, when we took the town, I had a dozen of them waiting in my anti-chamber; they are the civilest creatures breathing.



FOLLY ON BOTH SIDES.

FOLLY on both Sides is the true device of all disputants and their disputes. I do not speak here of those that have occasioned bloodshed. The ruin and devastation spread through all Westphalia by the Anabaptists; the wars excited in France by the Calvinists; the bloody factions of the Armagnacs* and the Burgundians; the punishment of the Maid of Orleans, whom one half of France revered as an heroine sent from heaven, and the other half detected as a vile forceress; the petition of the Sorbonne to have her committed to the flames; the assassination of the duke of Orleans justified by the divines; a decree of the Sacred Faculty releasing subjects from their oath of allegiance; the

* The factions of Armagnac and Burgundy distinguished the unfortunate reign of Charles VI. of France, and contributed in a great measure to the success of the English in conquering the kingdom.

employing of executioners to maintain tenets and opinions ; the kindling of fires to burn unhappy wretches who were persuaded to own themselves magicians or heretics ; all this surpassed folly : and here, by the way, let it be observed, that such execrable doings were the growth of the age of purity, and the effects of Germanic good faith and Gaulic simplicity ; to which I refer those honest people who are perpetually regretting past times.

And here I propose, purely for my own edification, to draw up a short memorandum of the curious matters that employed the attention and divided the opinions of our ancestors.

In the eleventh century, that good time when we knew nothing of the art of war, though we were continually fighting, and were equally ignorant of police, trade, and the rules of society ; when we knew neither how to read or write ; people of great parts engaged in solemn, long, and even sharp disputes, concerning what passed in the privy closet at the performing a certain office, which decency requires to be spoken of with the greatest reserve. This was called the dispute of the Stercorists* ; a dispute which did not excite a war indeed, and was therefore on that account the most sufferable of all the follies of the human mind.

The dispute about the Mosarabic version, which engaged the attention of the learned kingdom of Spain in the same century, terminated likewise without occasioning the desolation of provinces, or the effusion of blood.

* The sect of Stercorists were those who maintained, that part of the sacramental bread, when swallowed, was digested and converted to ordure.

6 FOLLY ON BOTH SIDES:

The spirit of chivalry, which reigned at that time, permitted no other method of clearing up this controversy, but by referring it to the decision of two noble knights; and him of the two *Don Quixotes* who first threw his adversary to the ground, was to establish that version of which he was the champion. *Don Ruis de Martanza*, knight of the Mosarabic ritual, unhorsed the *Don Quixote* of the Latin ritual; but as the laws of noble chivalry did not positively determine that a ritual was to be proscribed, because its knight was unhorsed, they had recourse to a more certain expedient (and which was then greatly in vogue) to determine which of the two books was to have the preference; and this was by throwing them both into the fire, when there was no doubt that the true ritual * would come out unhurt. But, I know not by what accident, they were both consumed, and the dispute remained undecided, to the great astonishment of the pious and learned Spaniards. By degrees the Latin ritual prevailed; and, if any knight had afterwards offered himself to defend the Mosarabic cause, the knight, and not the ritual, would have been thrown into the fire.

In these glorious times, we civilized people, when we were taken ill, were obliged to have recourse to an Arabian physician; and, if we wanted to know the age of the moon, we must apply to the Arabians; if we had occasion for

* It was in the papacy of Gregory VII. that the Roman service or Latin ritual was established in Leon and Castile, by the intrigues of Cardinal Hugo, surnamed the White, even after the preceding pope Alexander II. had declared, that the old Gothic liturgies were perfectly orthodox.

a piece of cloth, it was to be purchased of a Jew; and when a husbandman wanted rain, he addressed himself to a conjurer. But when, in process of time, we had learned Latin, and had gotten a miserable translation of Aristotle, we began to make a figure in the world, and for three or four hundred years employed ourselves in explaining a few pages of the Stagyræ, in worshipping them, and condemning them. Some have asserted, that but for him we had been destitute of the articles of faith; and others again as positively maintained that he was an Atheist. A Spaniard undertook to prove that Aristotle was a saint, and his nativity ought to be kept as a festival; a council in France condemned his divine writings to the flames; whole colleges, universities, and religious orders, have reciprocally anathematized each other on account of certain passages in this great man, which neither themselves, the judges who interposed their authority, nor the author himself, understood. Many fifty-cuffs were dealt on each side in Germany in consequence of those weighty disputes; but very little or no blood was shed. It is a little unlucky for Aristotle's fame that there was no civil war raised, nor any pitched battle fought, in favour of the *Quiddities*, and the *Whole of the Part of the Thing*. Our ancestors have cut each other's throats for controversies of as little signification.

It is true, indeed, that a very famous madman called Occam *, and surnamed the *Invincible Doctor*,

* William Occam, a native of England, was a Cordelier, who lived in the fourteenth century, and had been a disciple of Scot, whose doctrines he afterwards opposed. He was

Doctor, the chief of those who maintained the *Whole of a Part of the Thought*, desired the emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, to draw the sword of the empire in defence of his writings against one Scot, or *Scotus*, another madman, surnamed the *Subtile Doctor*, who stickled for the *Whole of the Part of the Thing*. Happily Lewis of Bavaria kept his sword in its scabbard. Who would imagine that these idle disputes should have continued even down to these later ages; and that the parliament of Paris, in 1614, issued a curious decree in favour of Aristotle?

Much about the time of the doughty Occam and his intrepid rival Scot, there arose a dispute of a more serious nature, in which the reverend fathers Cordeliers found means to engage the whole Christian world; namely, whether they had a right to the porridge * they eat, or were to be considered only as usufructuaries. The form of the cowl and the depth of the sleeve were also subjects of this holy war. Pope John XXII.

surnamed the *Invincible Doctor*, the *Singular Doctor*, and the *Venerable Preceptor*. He espoused the cause of Lewis of Bavaria, the declared enemy of the church of Rome; and used to say to that prince, "Defend me with your sword, " and I will support you with my pen." He was accused of having taught, that neither Christ nor his apostles had any possession, either in particular or in common. He wrote several tracts against the church of Rome, for which he was excommunicated; and the Protestants sometimes made use of his writings in their dispute with the papal see.

* The regulations of the Cordeliers not permitting them to have any possession of their own, pope Nicholas III. who had been of their order, resolved to enrich them without hurting their delicacy. With this view, he put them in possession of great estates, at the same time ordaining, that they should only have the use of those estates; but that the property of them should be vested in the church. This bull, however, was repealed by pope John XXII,

having

having interfered in these disputes, was soon made to know whom he had to deal with. The Cordeliers quitted him to side with Lewis, of Bavaria, who then unsheathed his sword. At that time three or four of these reverend disputants were burnt as heretics. This was carrying the jest rather too far; but, however, as this affair neither overturned thrones nor ruined whole states, it may be ranked in the number of peaceable follies.

There has never been a want of these; but most of them have sunk in silent oblivion; and of four or five hundred sects that have, at different times, made their appearance, mankind retain the remembrance of such only which have produced either excessive disorders or excessive absurdities; two things which are easily remembered. Who recollects at present that there were Orebites, Osmites, or Insdorfians? or knows any thing of the Cornacians or the Iscariotists?

One day, that I dined with a Dutch lady, I was charitably cautioned by one of the company to take care how I acted, and not to speak in commendation of Voetius*. And pray why this

* Gesbert Voet was, in the last century, a celebrated professor of theology in the university of Utrecht. He assisted at the synod of Dordrecht, and from that time became a zealous defender of Calvin's doctrines. He wrote virulently against Des Cartes, John Coccius, and Samuel Desmarsets, which last did not fail to retort his abuse. John Henry Cocceius, or Cock, was a native of Bremen, and made such great progress in the Greek tongue, and in theology, that he was chosen professor of both at Francker, and afterwards removed to Leyden. He compiled a Hebrew dictionary, and wrote commentaries upon the Old Testament, which are tedious, diffused, and chimerical. He

this caution? said I. Because, said my friendly adviser, the lady of the house is a Cocceian; adding, that there were still four of that sect in Holland, and that it would be a great unhappiness the race should become extinct. A time will come, when the Jansenists, who have made so much noise amongst us, and who are now hardly known, will share the same fate with the Cocceians. An old doctor said to me one day, Sir, in my younger days, I was a warm stickler for the *mandata impossibilia valentibus et conantibus*; I wrote against the formulary and the pope, and imagined myself a confessor; I was thrown into prison, and looked upon myself as a martyr. At present I meddle with nothing, and think myself reasonable. How do you employ yourself now? said I. Sir, replied he, I am very fond of money. In this manner do the greatest part of mankind, when they come to be old, laugh within themselves at the follies that they eagerly run after in their youth: Sects grow old, like men. Those which have not been supported by powerful princes, nor been the cause of great calamities, grow old sooner than others. They are epidemic disorders, which pass off like the sweating sickness, or the whooping cough.

We no longer hear of the pious reveries of a Madame Guion; we no longer read the unintelligible jargon of the *Maxims of Saints*, but in

pretends to have discovered many mystical meanings in the Scripture, which had escaped all former critics, and was indeed a visionary and enthusiast. Voetius and Desmarests called him an Innovator and Scripturarian; and, in a word, he was but scurvily treated by his Protestant brethren.

its room Telemachus; we remember not the writings of the eloquent Bossuet against the soft, the elegant, the charming Fenelon, and only give the preference to his funeral orations. The whole of the controversy about what was called *Quietism*, was nothing but the second edition of the old story of the good woman who carried a chafing-dish of coals to set fire to heaven, and a pitcher of water to extinguish hell, that mankind might for the future serve God neither through fear nor hope. I shall only observe one singular circumstance in this affair, that fell short of the story of the good woman, which is, that the Jesuits, who were so violently accused by the Jansenists as a body instituted by St. Ignatius on purpose to destroy the love of God, solicited the court of Rome in favour of the archbishop of Cambray's favourite tenet of true love. The same thing happened to him as did to Mr. de Langeais, who had an action brought against him in the parliament of Paris, by his wife, for impotency, and another in that of Rennes by a young girl, for having got her with child. One would think he must have been cleared upon one or other of the two indictments, and yet he was cast in both. The doctrine of pure love, for which the Jesuits bestirred themselves so violently, was condemned at Rome, and they themselves passed with all Paris for persons who wanted to abolish the love of God. This opinion was so rooted in all minds, that some years ago, when they published for sale a copper-plate representing our Saviour in the dress of a Jesuit, an arch was (undoubtedly the *Louistick* of the Jansenists party) wrote these line underneath:

*Admirez l'artifice extrême
De ces peres ingénieux ;
Ils vous ont habillé comme eux,
Mon Dieu, de peur qu'on ne vous aime.*

"How admirable is the artifice of these ingenious Fathers ! They have dressed our God like themselves, for fear we should be tempted to love him."

At Rome, which is never perplexed with disputes of this kind, and to whose tribunal all those of other places are referred, they soon began to grow weary of the controversies about pure love. Cardinal Carpegne, who was one of the council in the archbishop of Cambray's affair, happened to be afflicted with a grievous disorder in a certain part that is not more exempt from pains and maladies in a cardinal than in those of a less sacred character. His surgeon one day dressing him with some tents made of a fine cloth they call *Cambray* * in Italy, as well as in many other parts, and putting him to some pain, his eminence roared out. Sure, said the surgeon, it cannot hurt your eminency ; it is soft Cambray. How ! replied the cardinal, is Cambray got there too ? Is it not enough that he has already almost turned my head ? Happy the controversies that end in this manner ; happy for mankind if all the disputants and arch-heretics in the universe had submitted with the same moderation and magnanimous compliance as the great archbishop of Cambray, who of all mankind had the least inclination to be the leader of an heresy. I know not whe-

* What we call cambrick. The difference of the termination in English will not allow us to preserve the whole force of the play in the word that is in the French.

ther he was right in wanting us to love God purely for his own sake; but I am certain this amiable prelate highly merited to be loved in that manner.

In controversies that are merely literary, there is often as much rancour and party spirit as in disputes of the most interesting nature to mankind. If it was possible, we should see the factions of the circus revived amongst us, that for so long a time distracted the Roman empire. Two rival actresses are capable of setting a whole city by the ears. Mankind have in general a secret disposition to faction and party; and if they cannot cabal against, persecute, or destroy each other, for crowns, tiaras, or mitres, they will fall out about a fidler or a dancer. Rameau has had a violent party against him, who did all in their power to ruin him; but he knew nothing of it. I myself have had a party still more violent against me, and I was very sensible of it.

M E M N O N ;

O R,

H U M A N W I S D O M.

ONE day Memnon formed the mad project to be perfectly wise. Few men have not, at at one time or other, been infected with this folly. Memnon argued thus with himself: To be very wise, and consequently very happy, nothing more is necessary than to divest one's self of the passions, and every one knows this is easily done. In the first place, I will never love any woman; for, when I behold a perfect beauty, I will say to myself, Those blooming cheeks will one day be furrowed with wrinkles; those lively eyes sore and red with galling rheum; those swelling breasts, whose roundness is now so inviting to the touch, will become lank and shrivelled; those charming tresses grey and few in number; therefore I have nothing more to do than to look upon these charms now with the same eyes as I should then, and assuredly they can never cause me any emotions.

In the second place, I will be always sober. If at any time I am tempted by excellent cheer, delicious wines, or the charms of society, I shall have only to represent to myself the consequences of a debauch; such as an aching head, an over-loaded stomach, and the loss of reason, health, and time. I shall then eat and drink
only

only to satisfy nature ; I shall always enjoy an equal state of health ; my ideas will be always pure and bright. All this is so easy, that there is no merit in attaining to it.

In the next place, said Memnon ; continuing his soliloquy, I must think a little of my fortune. My desires are very moderate ; my estate is well secured in the funds of Niniveh ; I have enough to live independent, and that alone is a treasure. I shall never be under the disagreeable necessity of dancing attendance at courts ; I shall envy no one, nor will any one ever envy me. Is there any difficulty in this ? I have friends too ; those I shall preserve, because I will never give them any occasion to quarrel with me ; for I will shew no ill humour to them, nor they to me. How easy is all this ?

Having thus planned his little scheme of wisdom in his own room, Memnon put his head out of the window to look about him. He saw two women walking under the shade of the plantanes before his house. The one was old, and seemed to think of nothing ; the other young, handsome, and apparently buried in thought : she wept, she sighed, and this air of sorrow added to her charms. Our sage was touched, not with the beauty of the lady (for he was very certain he could not be susceptible of such a weakness), but with the affliction he saw her in. He descended into the street, and accosted the fair Ninevite with an intention to comfort her by his wisdom. This charming creature related to him in the most simple, yet pathetic manner, how an uncle, which she had never had, by a thousand villanies, artifices, and stratagems, had robbed her of an estate, which

which she never possessed; and that she had every thing to dread from his cruelty and oppression. You appear to me, said she, to be a person of so much wisdom and prudence, that if you will only be so obliging to go home with me to examine my affairs, I am certain you will be able to extricate me out of all my present difficulties. Memnon followed her without the least hesitation, in order to examine her affairs according to the rules of wisdom, and he gave her prudent counsel.

The afflicted lady led him into an apartment where the richest perfumes were burning, and very politely made him sit down by her on a sofa, where they continued for some time, with their legs across, facing each other. The lady, while she was talking, kept her eyes fixed on the ground, and every now and then a tear stole down her cheeks: sometimes she would gently lift them up, and then they always met those of the wise Memnon. Their conversation was full of a melting softness that increased every time they looked at each other. Memnon interested himself warmly in her affairs, and every instant felt a stronger desire to oblige a person, who was at once so perfectly well bred, and so unfortunate. Carried away by the warmth of the conversation, they insensibly altered their positions; they were no longer over against each other. Memnon plied his counsel so close, and gave her such tender advice, that at length they both forgot the business they were talking about, and were left to the world and themselves.

While they were in this critical situation, in comes the uncle, as may easily be supposed. He was

was armed cap-a-pié; and the first word he uttered was, that he would cut Memnon's and his niece's throat, as to be sure he had great reason to do; and concluded with observing, that he might be prevailed on to spare their lives, in consideration of a round sum of money. Memnon found himself obliged to part with all he had about him. People were happy in those times to get so well out of these sort of adventures. America was not then discovered, and afflicted ladies were not then half so dangerous as they are at present.

Memnon, overwhelmed with confusion and despair, returned home, where he found a letter from one of his most intimate friends to invite him to dinner. If I remain alone, said he to himself, I shall have my mind so occupied with my unhappy adventure, that I shall not be able to eat a morsel, and may fall ill. It will be better to go and take a frugal repast with my friends; their agreeable society will make me forget the folly I have been guilty of this morning. Accordingly to the rendezvous he goes: his friends find him melancholy: they urge him to drink, to drive away care. A little wine, taken in moderation, is an exhilarator of the spirits, and a strengthener of the faculties. Thus thought the wise Memnon, and he got drunk. After dinner, it was proposed to set down to play. Play within proper bounds, and among friends, is an agreeable and harmless recreation. He plays, he loses all his ready money, and four times as much upon his word. A dispute arises concerning the game; both parties grow warm; one of Memnon's intimate friends throws the dice-box at his head, and beats out one of his eyes.

eyes. The wife Memnon is carried home drunk, pennyless, and with the loss of an eye.

- After sleeping himself sober, he sends his man to his banker's for money to pay his intimate friends what he had lost to them. His man returns with the melancholy tidings that his banker had gone off that morning with a vast sum of money, which had thrown a hundred of the best families in Nineveh into a dreadful alarm. Memnon, enraged at this piece of villainy, repairs to court with a plaister on his eye, and a petition in his hand, to demand justice of the king against his banker. In the drawing-room he meets with several ladies walking about with hoops of twenty yards in circumference, with all the ease imaginable. One of them, who knew him, cried out, holding her fan up before her eyes, Oh ! the fright ! Another, who was more intimate with him, accosts him thus : Servant, Mr. Memnon : upon my word, I am very glad to see you, Mr. Memnon ; but pray, Mr. Memnon, how came you to lose one of your eyes ? And then swam across the room, without waiting for his answer. Memnon hid himself in a corner, waiting an opportunity of throwing himself at the king's feet. The monarch appears. Memnon bows himself thrice to the earth, and presents his petition ; which his majesty was pleased most graciously to receive ; and then handed to one of his satraps, with orders to give him an account of its contents. The satrap takes Memnon aside ; and with an air of authority, accompanied with the most bitter sneer, says to him, What a pretty one-eyed scoundrel you are, to apply to the king before you had spoken to me ; and presume

sume.

sume to demand justice against a worthy bankrupt, whom I honour with my protection, and who is no less than nephew to my wife's waiting-woman. Hark ye, my friend! if you have any regard for the eye you have left, take my advice, and drop this affair.

Thus Memnon, the wise Memnon, who, in the morning, had forsworn all commerce with women, made a vow of temperance, renounced gaming and quarrelling, and had determined never to be seen at court, was, before the night of the same day, cheated and robbed by a fine woman, got drunk, gamed, quarrelled with his most intimate friends, which cost him the loss of an eye, and made a visit to court, where every one laughed at him.

Petrified with astonishment, and pierced with grief, he returned home with a heavy heart. He attempts to enter his own house, an officer pushes him rudely back, and tells him, that his creditors have seized on all his goods for the money he owes them. Oppressed with these accumulated disasters, he throws himself lifeless under a plantane. At that instant the fair lady, whom he had comforted in the morning, passed by with her dear uncle; and seeing Memnon in that condition, and with a plaister on one eye, they both set up a horse-laugh, and continued their way. Night came on, and Memnon was glad to lie upon a truss of straw before his own door. He is seized with a fever. In the interval of the fit he falls asleep, when a celestial spirit appears to him in a dream—

A bright glory environed him: he had six beautiful wings; but neither head, feet, nor tail; and resembled nothing that has ever been
seen.

seen. Who art thou? said Memnon. Thy good genius, replied the phantom. Restore me my eye then, said Memnon, my health, my wealth, and my wisdom; and then he related to him how he had lost them all in a day. These accidents never happen to us in the world we inhabit, said the spirit. And pray what world may that be? asked the man of sorrows. My country, replied the other, is about five hundred millions of leagues beyond the sun, in a little star called Sirius, which you may see from hence. A charming country, I warrant it, said Memnon. I suppose now you have no jilts there, that fret a poor man? no intimate friends, that strip him at play, and afterwards beat one of his eyes out? no rascally bankers, that break with all your effects in their hands? nor no satraps, that make a jest of you when you come to demand justice? No, said the starry inhabitant, we have nothing of all this. We are never cheated by women, because we have no commerce with them; nor are we guilty of excess at table, because we never eat or drink any thing; we have no bankrupts amongst us, because we have neither gold nor silver; we are in no danger of having our eyes beat out, because we have no material bodies like yours; nor are there any satraps who can do us injustice, because in the star Sirius every one is equal.

But pray, good dinnerless and womanless Sir, demanded Memnon, how may you pass your time? In watching over the other globes that are committed to our care, said the genius; and I am now come to comfort thee. Ah! cried Memnon, stung with bitter remembrance, why wast thou

thou not present with me last night, to prevent my being guilty of so many follies? I was attending on thy elder brother Hassan, said the heavenly being: his fate is more deplorable than thine. His most gracious majesty the king of the Indies, at whose court he has the honour to be, has ordered both his eyes to be picked out for a little indiscretion he has been guilty of; and he is at this instant chained hands and feet in the bottom of a dungeon. It is of great use indeed, cried out Memnon, to have a good genius in a family, when one brother loses an eye, and the other is stark blind; one lies upon straw, and the other in a prison! Thy fortune shall change, replied the ætherial messenger: thou wilt be always blind of an eye indeed; but, that excepted, thy life will be tolerably happy, provided thou never more formest the ridiculous design of being perfectly wise. Alas! cried Memnon with a sigh, is it impossible then to attain to it? As much so, replied the genius, as to be perfectly skilful, perfectly strong, perfectly powerful, or perfectly happy. We ourselves are at a great distance from it. There is a globe, indeed, where all these are found; but in the hundred millions of millions of worlds that are dispersed through the immensity of space, every thing holds its degree. In the second globe there is less wisdom and felicity than in the first; less again in the third than in the second; and so of the rest to the very lowest, where the inhabitants are all fools. I am very much afraid then, said Memnon, that this same terraqueous globe of ours is the bedlam of the universe you have been pleased

to describe to me. Not quite, said the spirit; but it comes pretty near to it. Every thing must be in its place. Well, but, said Memnon, certain philosophers and poets must have been confoundedly out, when they tell us, "that whatever is, is right." They were just, replied the philosopher of the upper regions, so far as relates to the disposition of the whole universe. Ah! cried poor Memnon, you shall never make me believe that, so long as I have only one eye.



A Letter from a TURK, concerning
the FAQUIRS and his Friend
BABABEC.

WHEN I was in the city of Benarez, on the borders of the Ganges, the country of the antient Brachmans, I endeavoured to instruct myself in their religion and manners. I understood the Indian language tolerably well. I heard a great deal, and remarked every thing. I lodged at the house of my correspondent Omri, who was the most worthy man I ever knew. He was of the religion of the Bramins: I have the honour to be a Mussulman. We never exchanged one word higher than another about Mahomet or Brama. We performed our ablutions each on his own side; we drank of the same sherbet, and we eat of the same rice, as if we had been two brothers.

One day we went together to the pagoda of Gavani. There we saw several bands of Fakirs, some of whom were Janguis; that is to say, contemplative Fakirs; and others disciples of the antient Gymnosophists, who led an active life. They have all a learned language peculiar to themselves; it is that of the most antient Brachmans; and they have a book written in this language, which they call the Hanscrit. It is, beyond all contradiction, the most antient book in all Asia, not excepting the Zend.

I happened to cross a Fakir, who was reading in this book. Ah! wretched Infidel! cried he, thou hast made me lose a number of vowels that I was counting, which will occasion my soul to pass into the body of a hare instead of that of a parrot, with which I had before the greatest reason to flatter myself. I gave him a roupee to comfort him for the accident. In going a few paces farther, I had the misfortune to sneeze; the noise I made roused a Fakir who was in a trance. Heavens! cried he, what a dreadful noise! Where am I? I can no longer see the tip of my nose*! the heavenly light has disappeared. If I am the cause, said I, of your seeing further than the length of your nose, here is a roupee to repair the injury I have done you: squint again, and resume the heavenly sight.

Having thus brought myself off discreetly enough, I passed over to the side of the Gymnosophists, several of whom brought me a parcel

* When the Fakirs have a mind to see the heavenly light, which very frequently happens with them, they turn their eyes downwards towards the tip of their nose.

of mighty pretty nails to drive into my arms and thighs, in honour of Brama. I bought their nails, and made use of them to fasten down my boxes. Others were dancing upon their hands, others cut capers on the slack rope, and others went always upon one foot. There were some who dragged a heavy chain about with them, and others carried a pack-saddle; some had their heads always in a bushel; the best people in the world to live with. My friend Omri carried me to the cell of one of the most famous of these. His name was Bababec: he was as naked as he was born, and had a great chain about his neck, that weighed upwards of sixty pounds. He sat on a wooden chair, very neatly decorated with little points of nails, that run into his posteriors; and you would have thought he had been sitting on a velvet cushion. Numbers of women flocked to him to consult him: he was the oracle of all the families in the neighbourhood; and was, truly speaking, in great reputation. I was witness to a long conversation that Omri had with him. Do you think, father, said my friend, that, after having gone through seven metempsychoses, I may at length arrive at the habitation of Brama? That is as it may happen, said the Fakir. What sort of life do you lead? I endeavour, answered Omri, to be a good subject, a good husband, a good father, and a good friend: I lend money without interest to the rich who want it, and I give it to the poor: I preserve peace amongst my neighbours. But have you ever run nails into your backside? demanded the Bramin. Never, reverend father. I

am sorry for it, replied the father; very sorry for it, indeed: It is a thousand pities; but you will certainly not reach above the nineteenth heaven. No higher! said Omri. In troth, I am very well contented with my lot. What is it to me whether I go into the nineteenth or the twentieth, provided I do my duty in my pilgrimage, and am well received at the end of my journey? Is it not as much as one can desire, to live with a fair character in this world, and be happy with Brama in the next? And pray what heaven do you think of going to, good Master Bababec, with your nails and your chain? Into the thirty-fifth, said Bababec. I admire your modesty, replied Omri, to pretend to be better lodged than me: this is surely the mere effects of an excessive ambition. How can you, who condemn others that covet honours in this world, arrogate such distinguished one's to yourself in the next? What right have you to be better treated than me? Know, that I bestow more alms to the poor in ten days, than the nails you run into your backside cost for ten years! What is it to Brama, that you pass the whole day stark naked with a chain about your neck? This is doing a notable service to your country, doubtless! I have a thousand times more esteem for the man who sows pulse or plants trees for all your tribe, than they who look at the tip of their noses, or carry a pack-saddle to shew their magnanimity. Having finished this speech, Omri softened his voice, embraced the Bramin, and, with an endearing sweetness, besought him to throw aside his nails and his chain, to go home with him, and live with decency and comfort. The Faquir

was persuaded : he was washed clean, rubbed with essences and perfumes, and clad in a decent habit : he lived a fortnight in this manner, behaved with prudence and wisdom, and acknowledged that he was a thousand times more happy than before : but he lost his credit among the people ; the women no longer crouded to consult him : he therefore quitted the house of the friendly Omri, and returned to his nails and his chain, to regain his reputation.

OF VAIN-GLORY:.

B E I N G

The Substance of a CONVERSATION
with a Chinese.

IN the year 1723, there was a Chinese in Holland, who was both a learned man and a merchant, two things that ought by no means to be incompatible; but which, thanks to the profound respect that is shewn to money, and the little regard that the human species do, and ever will, pay to merit, are become so among us.

This Chinese, who spoke a little Dutch, happened to be in a bookseller's shop, at the same time that some literati were assembled there. He asked for a book; they offered him Bos-fuet's Universal History, badly translated. At the title Universal History, how pleased am I, cried the Oriental, to have met with this book; I shall now see what is said of our great empire; of a nation that has subsisted for upwards of fifty thousand years; of that long dynasty of emperors who have governed us for such a number of ages. I shall see what these Europeans think of the religion of our literati, and of that pure and simple worship we pay to the Supreme Being. What a pleasure will it be to me to find how they speak of our arts, many of which are of a more antient date with us than the æras of all the kingdoms of Europe! I fancy

the author will be greatly mistaken in relation to the war we had about twenty-two thousand five hundred and fifty-two years ago, with the martial people of Tonquin and Japan, as well as the solemn embassy that the powerful emperor of Mogulian sent, to request a body of laws from us in the year of the world 500000000000079123450000. Lord bless you, said one of the literati, there is hardly any mention made of that nation in this book, it is too inconsiderable. Almost the whole of it is taken up with an account of the first nation in the world, the only nation, those great people the Jews.

The Jews! said the Chinese, those people then must certainly be masters of three parts of the globe at least. They hope to be so one day, answered the other; but at present they are those pedlars that you see going about here with toys and knickknacks, and that sometimes do us the honour to clip our gold and silver. Surely you are not serious, said the Chinese, could those people ever have been in possession of a vast empire? Here I joined in the conversation, and told him, that for a few years they were in possession of a small country to themselves; but that we were not to judge of a people from the extent of their dominions, any more than of a man by his riches.

But does not this book take notice of some other nations, demanded the man of letters. Undoubtedly, replied a learned gentleman who stood at my elbow; it treats largely of a small country about sixty leagues wide, called Egypt, in which it is said that there is a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference, made

made by the hands of man. My god ! exclaimed the Chinese, a lake of one hundred and fifty leagues in circumference, within a spot of ground only sixty leagues wide, this is very curious ! The inhabitants of that country, continued the doctor, were all sages. What happy times were those, cry'd the Chinese, but is that all ? No, reply'd the other, there is mention made of those famous people the Greeks. Greeks ! Greeks ! said the Asiatic, who are those Greeks ? Why, reply'd the philosopher, they were masters of a little province, about the two hundredth part as large as China, but whose fame spread over the whole world. Indeed ! said the Chinese, with an air of openness and ingenuousness, I declare I never heard the least mention of these people, either in the Mogul's country, in Japan, or in Great Tartary.

Oh, the barbarian, the ignorant creature ! cry'd out our sage, very politely. Why then I suppose you know nothing of Epaminondas the Theban, nor of the Piræan Haven, nor the names of Achilles's two horses, nor of Silenus's ass ? You have never heard speak of Jupiter, nor of Diogenes, nor of Laïs, nor of Cybele, nor of —

I am very much afraid, said the learned Oriental, interrupting him, that you know nothing of that eternally memorable adventure of the famous Xixofan Concochigramki, nor of the mysteries of the great Fi-pfi-hi-hi. But pray tell me what other unknown things does this Universal History treat of ? Upon this my learned neighbour harangued for a quarter of an hour together about the Roman republic, and when he came to Julius Cæsar, the Chinese stopped him, and very gravely

I think I have heard of him, was he not a Turk? *

How! cry'd our sage in a fury, don't you so much as know the difference between Pagans, Christians, and Mahometans? Did you never hear of Constantine? Do you know nothing of the history of the popes? We have heard something confusedly of one Mahomet, reply'd the Asiatic.

It is impossible sure, said the other, but you must have heard at least of Luther, Zuinglius, Bellarmin, and Oecolampadius. I shall never remember all those names, said the Chinese; and so saying he quitted the shop, and went to sell a large quantity of Pekoa tea, and fine calli-coe, with which he bought two fine girls, and a young lad, and set sail for his own country, adoring *Tien*, and recommending himself to Confucius.

As to myself, the conversation I had been witness to, plainly discovered to me the nature of vain-glory; and I could not forbear exclaiming, Since Cæsar and Jupiter are names unknown to the finest, most ancient, most extensive, most populous, and most civilized kingdom in the universe, it becomes ye well, O ye rulers of petty states! ye pulpit orators of a narrow parish, or a little town! ye doctors of Salamanca, or of Bourges! ye trifling authors, and ye heavy commentators! It becomes you well, indeed, to aspire at reputation.

* Not long since the Chinese took all the Europeans to be Mahometans.

O F

S U I C I D E ;

O R,

S E L F - M U R D E R.

PHILIP MORDAUNT, cousin-german to the famous earl of Peterborough, who was so well known in all the courts of Europe, and who made his boast that he had seen more postillions, and more crowned heads, than any other man in the world; this Philip Mordaunt, I say, was a young man about twenty-seven, handsome, well-made, rich, of an illustrious family, and one who might pretend to any thing; and, what was more than all the rest, he was passionately beloved by his mistress. However, this man took a distaste to life, discharged all that he owed, wrote to his friends to take leave of them, and even composed some verses upon the occasion, which concluded thus, that “*tho’* opium might be some relief to a wise man, if disgusted with the world, yet in his opinion a pistol, and a little resolution, were much more effectual remedies.” His behaviour was suitable to his principles; and he dispatched himself with a pistol, without giving any other reason for it than that his soul was weary of his body, and that when we dislike our house we ought to quit it. One would imagine he chose to die because he was weary of being happy.

One Richard Smith has lately exhibited a most extraordinary instance of this nature to the world. This Smith was tired of being really unhappy : he had been rich, and was reduced to poverty : he had been healthy, and was become infirm : he had a wife, to whom he had nothing to give but a share in his misfortunes ; and an infant in the cradle was the only thing he had left. Richard Smith and his wife Bridget then, after having affectionately embraced, and given each a formal kiss to their child, first cut the poor little creature's throat, and then hanged themselves at the foot of their bed. I do not remember, to have heard any where of such a scene of horrors committed in cold blood ; but the letter which these unhappy wretches wrote to their cousin Mr. Brindley before their death, is as remarkable as the manner itself of their death. " We are certain, said they, of meeting with forgiveness from God, &c. We put an end to our lives because we were miserable, without any prospect of relief ; and we have done our child that service to put it out of life, for fear it should have been as miserable as ourselves, &c." It is to be observed, that these people, after having murdered their child out of their paternal affection, wrote to a friend, recommending their dog and cat to his care. They thought, probably, that it was easier to make their dog and cat happy in this world than their child, and that the keeping them would not be any great expence to their friend *.

The

† Richard Smith was a bookbinder, and prisoner for debt, within the liberty of the king's bench ; and this shocking

The earl of Scarborough has lately quitted life with the same indifference as he did his place of master of the horse. Having been told in the house of lords that he sided with the court, on account of the profitable post he held in it, My lords, said he, to convince you that my opinion is not influenced by any such consideration, I will instantly resign. He afterwards found himself perplexed between a mistress he was fond of, but to whom he was under no engagements, and a woman whom he esteemed, and to whom he had made a promise of marriage. My lord Scarborough, therefore, killed himself to get rid of difficulty †.

The many tragical stories of this nature, with which the English news-papers abound, have made the greatest part of Europe imagine, that the English are fonder of killing themselves than any other people: and yet I question much whether there are not as many madmen at Paris as at London; and if our news-papers were to keep an exact register of those who have either had the folly, or unhappy resolution to destroy themselves, we might in this respect be found to vie with the English. But our compilers of news are more prudent; the adventures of private persons are never set forth to public scandal in any of the papers licensed by the govern-

shocking tragedy was acted in the year 1732. Smith and his wife had been always industrious and frugal, invincibly honest, and remarkable for conjugal affection.

† Lord S-----h's immediate motive for suicide was said to be remorse for having weakly discovered to a lady a secret of state, intrusted to him by his sovereign: but, in truth it seems to have been the effect of a temporary delirium, owing to a constitutional disorder.

ment : however, I believe I may venture to affirm, that this rage of suicide will never become epidemical. Nature has sufficiently guarded against it, and hope and fear are the powerful curbs she makes use of to stop the hand of the wretch uplifted to be his own executioner.

I know it may be said, that there have been countries where a council was established to give licence to the people to kill themselves, when they could give sufficient reasons for doing it. To this I answer, that either the fact is false, or that such council found very little employment.

There is one thing indeed which may cause some surprize, and which I think deserves to be seriously discussed, which is, that almost all the great heroes among the Romans, during the civil wars, killed themselves when they lost a battle, and that we do not find an instance of a single leader, or great man, in the disputes of the League, the Fronde, or during the troubles of Italy and Germany, who put end to his life with his own hand. It is true, that these latter were Christians, and that there is great difference between a Christian soldier and a Pagan ; and yet, how comes it that those very men who were so easily with-held by Christianity, from putting an end to their own lives, should be restrained either by that or any other consideration, when they had a mind to poison, assassinate, or publicly execute a vanquished enemy ? Does not the Christian religion forbid this manner of taking away the life of a fellow creature, if possible more than that of our own ? The advocates for suicide tell us, that it is very allowable to quit our house when we are weary of it. Agreed :
but

but most men had rather lie in a bad house, than sleep in the open fields.

I one day received a circulatory letter from an Englishman, in which he proposes a premium to the person who should the most clearly demonstrate that it was allowable for a man to kill himself. I made him no answer, for I had nothing to prove to him, and he had only to examine within himself if he preferred death to life.

But then let us ask why Cato, Brutus, Cassius, Anthony, Otho, and so many others, gave themselves death with so much resolution, and that our leaders of parties suffered themselves to be taken alive by their enemies, or waste the remains of a wretched old age in a dungeon? Some refined wits pretend to say, that the ancients had no real courage; that Cato acted like a coward in putting an end to his own life; and that he would have shewed more greatness of soul in crouching beneath the victorious Cæsar. This may be very well in an ode, or as a figure in rhetoric; but it is very certain there must be some courage to resign a life coolly by the edge of a sword, some strength of mind thus to overcome the most powerful instinct of nature: in a word, that such an act shews a greater share of ferocity than weakness. When a sick man is in a phrenzy, we cannot say he has no strength, though we may say it is the strength of a madman.

Self-murder was forbid by the Pagan as well as by the Christian religion. There was even a place allotted in hell to those who put an end to their own lives. Witness these lines of the poet.

*Proxima deinde tenent mœsti loca; qui sibi lethum
 Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
 Projecere animas; quam vellent æthere in alto
 Nunc & pauperiem, & duros perferre labores!
 Fata obstant, tristisque Palus anamabilis unda
 Adligat, & novies Styx interfusa coercet.*

VIRG. *Æn.* lib. vi. v. 434, &c.

Then crowds succeed, who, prodigal of breath,
 Themselves anticipate the doom of death;
 Tho' free from guilt, they cast their lives away,
 And sad and sullen hate the golden day.
 Oh! with what joy the wretches now would bear
 Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe, the vital air!
 In vain! by fate for ever are they bound
 With dire Avernus, and the lake profound;
 And Styx with nine wide channels roars around. }

PITT.

This was the religion of the heathens; and notwithstanding the torments they were to meet with in the other world, it was esteemed an honour to quit this by giving themselves death by their own hands; so contradictory are the manners of men! Is not the custom of duelling still unhappily accounted honourable amongst us, tho' prohibited by reason, by religion, and by all laws divine and human? If Cato and Cæsar, Anthony and Augustus, did not challenge each other to a duel, it was not that they were less brave than ourselves. If the duke of Montmerenci, marechal Marillac, de Thou, Cinq-Mars, and many others, rather chose to be dragged to execution like the vilest miscreants, than put an end to their own lives like Cato and Brutus, it was not that they had less courage than those Romans: the true reason is, that it was not then

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then the fashion at Paris to kill one's self on such occasions ; whereas it was an established custom with the Romans.

The women on the Malabar coast throw themselves alive into the flames, in which the bodies of their dead husbands are burning. Is it because they have more resolution than Cornelia ? No ; but the custom of the country is for wives to burn themselves.

Custom and fancy of our fate decide,
And what is this man's shame is t'other's pride.

OF THE RELIGION of the QUAKERS.

BEING of opinion that the doctrine and history of so extraordinary a sect as the Quakers were very well deserving the curiosity of every thinking man, I resolved to make myself acquainted with them, and for that purpose made a visit to one of the most eminent of that sect in England, who, after having been in trade for thirty years, had the wisdom to prescribe limits to his fortune, and to his desires, and withdrew to a small but pleasant retirement in the country, not many miles from London. Here it was that I made him my visit. His house was small, but neatly built, and with no other ornaments but those of decency and convenience. The quaker himself was a hale ruddy complexioned old man, who had never suffered from sickness, because he had always been a stranger to passions and intemperance. I never
in

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in my life saw any one have a more noble, or a more engaging aspect. He was drest after the fashion of those of his persuasion, in a plain coat, without plaits in the side, or buttons on the pockets and sleeves; and he wore a beaver hat, the brim of which flapped downwards like those of our clergy. He advanced towards me without moving his hat, or making the least inclination of his body; but there appeared more real politeness in the open humane air of his countenance, than in drawing one leg behind the other, and carrying that in the hand which is made to be worn on the head. Friend, says he, I perceive thou art a stranger, if I can do thee any service thou hast only to let me know it. Sir, I reply'd, bowing my body, and sliding one leg towards him, as is the custom with us, I flatter myself that my curiosity, which you will allow to be just, will not give you any offence, and that you'll do me the honour to inform me of the particulars of your religion. The people of thy country, answered the Quaker, are too full of their bows and their compliments; but I never yet met with one of them who had so much curiosity as thyself. Come in and let us dine first together. I still continued to make some silly compliments, it not being easy to disengage one's self at once from habits we have been long accustomed to; and after taking part of a frugal meal, which began and ended with a prayer to God, I began to put questions to my plain host.

I opened with that which good Catholics have more than once made to Huguenots. My dear Sir, says I, were you ever baptized? No, friend, replied the Quaker, nor any of my brethren.

thren. Zounds! says I to him, you are not Christians then! Friend, replies the old man, in a soft tone of voice, do not swear; we are Christians, but we do not think that sprinkling a few drops of water on a child's head makes him a Christian. My god! exclaimed I, shocked at his impiety, have you then forgot that Christ was baptized by St. John? Friend, replies the mild Quaker, once again, do not swear. Christ was baptized by John, but he himself never baptized any one: now we profess ourselves disciples of Christ, and not of John. Mercy on us, cry'd I, what a fine subject you would be for the holy inquisitor! In the name of God, my good old man, let me baptize you. Were that all, replied he very gravely, we would submit chearfully to be baptized, purely in compliance with thy weakness; for we do not condemn any person who uses that rite; but, on the other hand, we think that those who profess a religion of so holy and spiritual a nature as that of Christ, ought to abstain to the utmost of their power from Jewish ceremonies.

Why there again! says I, baptism a Jewish ceremony! Yes, my friend, says he, and so truly Jewish, that many Jews use the baptism of John to this day. Peruse ancient authors, and they will shew thee, that John only revived this practice, and that it was in use among the Hebrews long before his time, the same as the pilgrimage to Mecca was among the Ishmaelites. Jesus indeed submitted to be baptized of John, in the like manner as he had undergone circumcision; but both the one and the other ceremony were to end in the baptism of Christ, that baptism of the spirit, that ablution of the soul which is the salvation of mankind. Thus the forerunner John said, *I indeed baptize you with water unto*
repent-

repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. St. Paul likewise, the great apostle of the Gentiles, writes thus to the Corinthians, Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the gospel. Accordingly Paul never baptized but two persons with water, and that against his inclination. He circumcised his disciple Timothy; and the other apostles circumcised all those who were desirous of it. Art thou circumcised? added he. I really have not that honour, reply'd I. Wilt thou, friend? reply'd the Quaker; thou art a Christian without being circumcised, and I am one without being baptized.

Thus did my pious host make a false but very specious application of three or four passages of holy writ, which seemed to favour the tenets of his sect; but at the same time forgot, very sincerely, above an hundred others that directly overturned them. I resolved, not to contend with him, as there is nothing to be gained by arguing with an enthusiast: one should never pretend to discover to a lover his mistress's faults, to a lawyer the weakness of one's cause, nor force the truth upon a fanatic. Accordingly I proceeded to other questions.

Pray, says I to him, in what manner do you communicate? We have no such ceremony amongst us, replied he. How! said I, have you no communion? No, answered he, no other than that of hearts. He then began again to quote his texts of scripture, and read me a very curious lecture against the sacrament; and harangued with a tone of inspiration to prove that the sacraments were mere human inventions, and that the word *sacrament* was not once mentioned in

in the Scripture. I must ask thy excuse, said he, for my ignorance; for I am sensible I have not employed an hundredth part of the arguments, that might be made use of, to prove the truth of our religion: but thou mayst see them all amply unfolded in the Exposition of our Faith, written by Robert Barclay. It is one of the best books that ever came from the hand of man: our very adversaries confess it is dangerous, and that is sufficient alone to prove its goodness. I promised to peruse this piece; and my Quaker thought he had already made a convert.

He then proceeded to give me a brief account of certain singularities, which make this sect the contempt of others. Confess, said he, that it was very difficult for thee to refrain from laughing, when I answered all thy compliments without uncovering my head, and at the same time spoke to thee only with *thee* and *thou*. However, thou appearest to me too well read not to know, that, in Christ's time, no nation was so ridiculous as to use the plural for the singular. They said to Augustus Cæsar himself, *I love thee, I beseech thee, I thank thee*; and he would not even suffer himself to be called *Domine*, Sir. It was not till long after his time that men took the ridiculous notion of having themselves called *you*, instead of *thou*, as if they were double, and usurped the impertinent titles of *lordship*, *eminence*, and *holiness*, which poor reptiles bestow on other reptiles like themselves; assuring them, that they are, *with the most profound respect*, and an infamous falshood, their *most obedient humble servants*. It is the more effectually to secure ourselves against this shame.

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shameful traffic of lies and flattery, that we *thee* and *thou* a king, with the same freedom as we do his meanest servant; and salute no person, as owing mankind only charity, and respect only to the laws.

We dress also differently from others, and this purely that it may be a perpetual warning to us not to imitate them. While others pride themselves on wearing the badges of their several dignities, we confine ourselves to those of christian humility. We shun all the assemblies of the gay, we avoid places of diversions of all kinds, and carefully abstain from gaming; for wretched would be our state, indeed, were we to fill with such levities the heart that ought to be the habitation of God. We never swear, not even in a court of justice; being of opinion, that the name of the Most High ought not to be prostituted in the frivolous contests between man and man. When we are obliged to appear before a magistrate, upon the concerns of others (for law-suits are unknown among *the Friends*), we affirm the truth by our *yea* or *nay*, and they believe us on our simple affirmation, while other Christians are daily perjuring themselves on the blessed Gospels. We never take up arms, not that we are fearful of death: on the contrary, we bless the instant that unites us to the Being of Beings. The reason is, that we are neither wolves, tygers, nor mastiffs, but men and christians. Our God, who has commanded us to love our enemies, and to suffer without repining, can certainly not order us to cross the seas, and cut the throats of our fellow-creatures, as often as murderers, clothed in scarlet, and wearing caps

caps two feet high, enlist peaceful citizens by a noise made with two sticks on an ass's skin extended. And when, after the gaining of a battle, all London blazes with illuminations, when the air glows with fireworks, and a noise is heard of thanksgivings, of bells, of organs, and of cannon, we groan in silence for the cruel havock which occasions these public rejoicings.



OF THE
RELIGION of the QUAKERS,
continued.

SUCH was the substance of the conversation I had with this very singular person *; and I was greatly surpris'd when, the Sunday following, he came to take me with him to one of

* The name of this Quaker was Andrew Pit; and the whole of the preceding chapter is strictly true, except in a very few circumstances. Andrew Pit lately wrote to the author, to complain that he had a little amplified facts; assuring him at the same time, that God was greatly offended at his having diverted himself and his readers at the expence of the Quakers †.

† In consequence of the first publication of these letters concerning the Quakers, an answer was written and sent to the author by one of that people. The design of it was to give him an opportunity of correcting, in the subsequent editions, the errors of his first: but these letters having been since published without any such correction, the answer was printed, that every reader might judge for himself.

The

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of their meetings. There are several of these in London; but that which he carried me to, stands near the famous pillar called the Monument. The brethren were already assembled when I entered with my guide. There might be about four hundred men, and three hundred women, in the place. The women hid their faces with their hoods, and the men were covered with their broad-brimmed hats. All were sitting, and there was an universal silence amongst them. I past through the midst of them; but not one lifted up his eyes to look at me. This silence lasted a quarter of an hour; when at last an old man rose up, took off his hat, and after making a number of wry faces, and groaning in a most lamentable manner, he, half mouthing, half snuffing, threw out a heap of unaccountable stuff, (taken, as he thought, from the Gospel) which neither himself nor any of his auditors understood. When this religious buffoon had ended his curious soliloquy, and that the assembly broke up, very much edified, and very stupid, I asked my guide, how it

The Quakers complain, that M. de Voltaire mistook his talents, when he meddled with religion; the facetious levity of his expression being quite unsuitable to the serious gravity of such a subject. The vivacity of his style, and the delicacy of his diction (say they), are very pleasant and entertaining: but errors in *fact*, so clad, are the more dangerous; the frequency of which, in his third and fourth letters, bespeaks him not well read in the history he undertook to write. For a refutation of those errors, and as the means of obviating the author's misrepresentations of the Quakers, the curious reader is referred to the Letter abovementioned, and to Penn's Rise and Progress of that People, printed by L. Hinde in George-yard, Lombard-street.

was possible the judicious part of them could suffer such incoherent prating? We are obliged, said he, to suffer it, because no one knows, when a brother rises up to hold forth, whether he will be moved by the spirit or by folly. In this uncertainty, we listen patiently to every one. We even allow our women to speak in public: two or three of them are often inspired at the same time, and then a most charming noise is heard in the Lord's house. You have no priests, then? said I. No, no, friend, replied the Quaker, heaven make us thankful! Then opening one of the books of their sect, he read the following words in an emphatic tone: God forbid we should presume to ordain any one to receive the Holy Spirit on the Lord's day, in exclusion to the rest of the faithful! Thanks to the Almighty, we are the only people upon earth that have no priests! Wouldst thou deprive us of so happy a distinction? Wherefore should we abandon our child to hireling nurses, when we ourselves have milk enough to nourish it? These mercenary creatures would quickly domineer in our houses, and oppress both the mother and the child. God has said, You have received freely, give as freely. Shall we, after this injunction, barter, as it were, the Gospel; sell the Holy Spirit, and make of an assembly of Christians a mere shop of traders? We do not give money to a set of men, cloathed in black, to assist our poor, to bury our dead, or to preach to the brethren: these holy offices are held in too high esteem by us to intrust them to others." "But how, said I, with some warmth, how can you pretend to know whether

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ther your discourse is really inspired by the Almighty? Whosoever, replied my friend, shall implore Christ to enlighten him, and shall publish the truths contained in the Gospel, of which he inwardly feels, such a one may be assured that he is inspired by the Lord. He then overwhelmed me with a multitude of scripture quotations, which proved, as he imagined, that there is no such thing as Christianity, without an immediate revelation; and added these remarkable words: When thou movest one of thy limbs, is it moved by thy own power? Certainly not; for this limb is often liable to involuntary motions; consequently he who created thy body gives motion to this earthy tabernacle. Or are the several ideas, of which thy soul receives the impression, of thy own formation? Still less so; for they come upon thee whether thou wilt or no, consequently thou receivest thy ideas from him who created thy soul. But as he leaves thy heart at full liberty, he gives thy mind such ideas as thy heart may deserve: if thou livest in God, thou actest and thinkest in God. After this, thou needest but open thine eyes to that light which enlightens all mankind, and then thou wilt perceive the truth, and make others perceive it. Why, this, says I, is our Malbranche's doctrine to a tittle. I am acquainted with thy Malbranche, said he: he had something of the Quaker in him; but he was not enough so.

These are the most considerable particulars I have been able to gather, concerning the doctrine of the Quakers. In the ensuing pages you will find some account of their history, which is still more singular than their opinions.

T H E

HISTORY of the QUAKERS.

YOU have already heard that the Quakers date their epocha from Christ, who, according to them, was the first Quaker. Religion, say they, was corrupted almost immediately after his death, and remained in that state of corruption about sixteen hundred years. But there were always a few of the faithful concealed in the world, who carefully preserved the sacred fire, which was extinguished in all but themselves; till at length this light shone out in England in 1642.

It was at the time when Great Britain was distracted by intestine wars, which three or four sects had raised in the name of God, that one George Fox, a native of Leicestershire, and son to a silk-weaver, took it into his head to preach the Word, and, as he pretended, with all the requisites of a true apostle; that is, without being able either to read or write. He was a young man, about twenty-five years of age, of irreproachable manners, and religiously mad. He was clad in leather from head to foot, and travelled from one village to another, exclaiming against the war and the clergy. Had he confined his invectives to the military only, he would have had nothing to fear; but he inveighed against churchmen. Fox was seized at Derby, and being carried before a justice of peace, he stood with his leathern hat on: upon which an officer gave him a great box on the ear,

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ear, and cried to him, " You unmannerly rascal, don't you know you are to appear uncovered before his worship?" Fox very deliberately presents his other cheek to the officer, and begged him to give him another box of the ear for God's sake. The justice would have had him sworn before he put any questions to him; but Fox refused, saying, " Friend, know that I never swear." The justice, finding himself *thee'd* and *thou'd* by him, and enraged at his insolence, ordered him to the house of correction, there to be whipt. Fox returned thanks to the Lord all the way he went to prison, where the justice's orders were executed with great severity. Those who whipt him were greatly surpris'd to hear this enthusiast beseech them to give him a few more lashes, for the good of his soul. These gentlemen did not wait for many intreaties: Mr. Fox had his dose doubled, for which he thanked them very cordially, and then began to hold forth. At first the attendants fell a-laughing; but they afterwards listened to him: and as enthusiasm is a catching distemper, many were persuaded, and those who had scourged him became his disciples. Being afterwards set at liberty, he went up and down the country, with a dozen profelytes at his heels, declaiming against the clergy, and receiving flagellations from time to time. One day being set in the pillory, he made so moving an harangue to the crowd, that fifty of the auditors became his converts; and he won so much over the rest, that they tumultuously pulled his head out of the hole, and then went in a body to search for the church of England clergyman who had been chiefly

instrumental in bringing him to this punishment, and set him on the same pillory where Fox had stood.

Fox had the boldness to make converts of some of Oliver Cromwel's soldiers, who immediately quitted the service, and refused to take the oaths. Oliver, having as great a contempt for a sect which would not fight, as pope Sixtus V. had for another sect, *dove non si chiavava*, began to persecute these new converts. The prisons were crouded with them; but persecution seldom has any other effect than to increase the number of proselytes. They came forth from their confinement more full of zeal than ever, and followed by their jailors, whom they had likewise converted. But what contributed chiefly to the spreading of this sect were the following circumstances. Fox thought himself inspired, and was therefore of opinion, that he must speak in a manner different from the rest of mankind: upon which he began to writhe his body, to screw up the muscles of his face, to hold in his breath, and to exhale it again in a forcible manner; insomuch that the priestesses of the Delphic god could not have acted her part to better advantage. Inspiration soon became so habitual to him, that he could scarce deliver himself in any other manner. This was the first gift he communicated to his disciples: these copied their master closely in his grimaces and contortions, and shook from head to foot at the instant of inspiration; and from hence they got the name of Quakers. The vulgar, ever the dupes of novelty, amused themselves with mimicking these people, trembled, spoke through the nose, quaked, and fancied

themselves inspired by the Holy Ghost. They only wanted a few miracles, and those they wrought.

This new patriarch Fox said one day to a justice of peace, before a large assembly of people, "Friend, take care what thou do'st: God will soon punish thee for persecuting his saints." This magistrate, being one who debauched himself every day with bad beer and brandy, died of an apoplexy two days after, just as he had signed a *Mittimus* for imprisoning some Quakers. The sudden death of this justice was not ascribed to his intemperance; but was universally looked upon as the effect of the holy man's predictions; so that this accident made more Quakers than a thousand sermons, and as many shaking fits, would have done. Cromwel, finding them increase daily, was willing to bring them over to his party, and for that purpose tried bribery: however, he found them incorruptible, which made him one day declare, that this was the only religion he had ever met with that could resist the charms of gold.

The Quakers suffered several persecutions under Charles II. not upon a religious account; but for refusing to pay the tythes, for *theeing* and *thouing* the magistrates, and for refusing to take the oaths enacted by the laws.

At length Robert Barclay, a native of Scotland, presented to the king, in 1675, his Apology for the Quakers; a work as well drawn up as the subject could possibly admit. The dedication to Charles II. instead of being filled with mean flattering encomiums, abounds with bold truths and the wisest counsels. "Thou
hast

hast tasted," says he to the king, at the close of his Epistle Dedicatory, "of prosperity and adversity: thou hast been driven out of the country over which thou now reignest, and from the throne on which thou sittest: thou hast groaned beneath the yoke of oppression; therefore hast thou reason to know how hateful the oppressor is, both to God and man. If, after all these warnings and advertisements, thou do'st not turn unto the Lord, with all thy heart; but forget him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give thyself up to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy guilt, and bitter thy condemnation. Instead of listening to the flatterers about thee, hearken only to the voice that is within thee, which never flatters. I am thy faithful friend and servant, ROBERT BARCLAY."

The most surprising circumstance is, that this letter, though written by an obscure person, was so happy in its effects as to put a stop to the persecution.



C O N C L U S I O N

O F T H E

HISTORY of the QUAKERS.

ABOUT this time appeared the illustrious William Pen, who established the power of the Quakers in America, and would have rendered them respectable in the eyes of the

Europeans, if mankind could respect virtue when appearing in the shape of folly. This man was the only son of vice-admiral Pen, favourite to the duke of York, afterwards king James II.

William Pen, when only fifteen years of age, chanced to meet a Quaker in Oxford, where he was then following his studies. This Quaker made a profelyte of him; and our young man, being naturally sprightly and eloquent, having a very winning aspect and engaging carriage, soon gained over some of his companions and intimates, and in a short time formed a society of young Quakers, who met at his house; so that at the age of sixteen he found himself the head of a sect. Having left college, at his return home to the vice-admiral his father, instead of kneeling to ask his blessing, as is the custom with the English, he went up to him with his hat on, and accosted him thus; "Friend, I am glad to see thee in good health." The vice-admiral thought his son crazy; but soon discovered he was turned Quaker. He then employed every method that prudence could suggest, to engage him to behave and act like other people. The youth answered his father only with repeated exhortations to turn Quaker also. After much altercation, his father confined himself to this single request, that he would wait on the king and the duke of York with his hat under his arm, and that he would not *thee* and *thou* them. William answered that, his conscience would not permit him to do these things. This exasperated his father to such a degree, that he turned him out of doors. Young Pen gave God thanks
that

that he permitted him to suffer so early in his cause, and went into the city, where he held forth, and made a great number of converts, and being young, handsome, and a graceful figure, both court and city ladies flocked very devoutly to hear him. The patriarch Fox, hearing of his great reputation, came to London (notwithstanding the length of the journey) purposely to see and converse with him. They both agreed to go upon missions into foreign countries; and accordingly they embarked for Holland, after having left a sufficient number of labourers to take care of the London vineyard.

Their labours met with all the success they could wish in Amsterdam: but a circumstance, which reflected the greatest honour on them, and at the same time put their humility to the strongest test, was the reception they met from the princess Palatine, Elizabeth, aunt to George I. of Great Britain, a lady conspicuous for her genius and knowledge, and to whom Descartes had dedicated his Philosophical Romance.

She was then retired to the Hague, where she received these *Friends*; for so the Quakers were at that time called in Holland. This princess had several conferences with them: they held several of their meetings at her house, and, if they did not make a perfect convert of her, they at least acknowledged that she was not far from the kingdom of heaven. The Friends sowed the good seed likewise in Germany; but had only an indifferent harvest; for the mode of *theeing* and *thouing* was not relished in a country where every one was obliged to make use of Your Highness, and Your Ex-

cellence. Pen soon quitted that country, and returned to England, having received advice that his father was ill, to see him before he died. The vice-admiral was reconciled to his son, and, though of a different persuasion, embraced him tenderly. William, in vain, exhorted his father not to receive the sacrament, and to die a Quaker; and the good old man intreated his son William to wear buttons on his sleeves, and a crape hatband in his beaver; but all to no purpose.

William inherited very large possessions, part of which consisted in crown-debts, due to the vice-admiral for sums he had advanced for the sea-service. No moneys were at that time less secure than those owing from the king. Pen was obliged to go, more than once, and *thou* Charles and his ministers, to recover the debt; and at last, instead of specie, the government invested him with the right and sovereignty of a province of America, to the south of Maryland. Thus was a Quaker raised to sovereign power.

He set sail for his new dominions with two ships filled with Quakers, who followed his fortune. The country was then named by them Pensylvania, from William Pen; and he founded Philadelphia, which is now a very flourishing city. His first care was to make an alliance with his American neighbours; and this is the only treaty between those people and the Christians that was not ratified by an oath, and that was never intringed. The new sovereign likewise enacted several wise and wholesome laws for his colony, which have remained invariably the same to this day. The chief is,

to ill-treat no person on account of religion, and to consider as brethren all those who believe in one God. He had no sooner settled his government, but several American merchants came and peopled this colony. The natives of the country, instead of flying into the woods, cultivated by degrees a friendship with the peaceable Quakers. They loved these new strangers as much as they disliked the other Christians, who had conquered and ravaged America. In a little time these savages, as they are called, delighted with their new neighbours, flocked in crowds to Pen, to offer themselves as his vassals. It was an uncommon thing to behold a sovereign *thee'd* and *thou'd* by his subjects, and addressed by them with their hats on; and no less singular for a government to be without one priest in it; a people without arms, either for offence or preservation; a body of citizens without any distinctions but that of public employments; and for neighbours to live together free from envy or jealousy. In a word, William Pen might, with reason, boast of having brought down upon earth the Golden Age, which, in all probability, never had any real existence but in his dominions.

Some time afterwards he returned to England, to settle some affairs relating to his new dominions. King James II. who had loved his father, had the same affection for the son, and considered him rather as a great man than an obscure sectary. The king's politics, on this occasion, agreed with his inclinations. He was desirous of pleasing the Quakers, by annulling the laws made against Nonconformists, in order to have an opportunity, by this general

toleration, to introduce the Romish religion. All the sectaries in England saw the snare that was laid for them, and took care to be upon their guard: they always unite when the Romish religion, their common enemy, is to be opposed. But Pen did not think himself bound, in any manner, to renounce his principles, merely to favour Protestants who hated him, in opposition to a king who loved him. He had established liberty of conscience in his American dominions, and he would not appear to intend to destroy it in Europe. He therefore adhered to James, and so strictly, that he was generally accused of being a Jesuit. However, the unfortunate king James II. was, like most princes of the Stuart family, an odd medley of grandeur and weakness; and, like them, always did too much or too little, lost his kingdom in a manner that could not be accounted for. All the English sectaries accepted from William III. and his parliament, the toleration and indulgence which they had refused, when offered by king James. It was then the Quakers began to enjoy, by virtue of the laws, the several privileges they possess at this time.

Pen, having at length seen Quakerism firmly established in his native country, returned back to Pennsylvania; where, at his arrival, he was received by his own people and the Americans with tears of joy, as if he had been a father, who was returned to his children after a long absence. The laws he had enacted had been religiously observed in his absence; a circumstance which had happened to no legislator but himself. After having resided some years in Pennsylvania, he quitted it, but with great reluctance,

luctance, to return to England, there to solicit some matters in favour of the trade of Pennsylvania. But he lived not to revisit it again, being taken off by death in London, *anno* 1718.

It was in the reign of Charles II. that they obtained the noble distinction of being exempted from giving their testimony on oath in a court of justice, and being believed on their bare affirmation. On this occasion the chancellor, who was a man of wit, spoke to them as follows: " Friends, Jupiter one day ordered that all the beasts of burthen should repair to be shoed. The asses represented, that their laws would not allow them to submit to that operation. Very well, said Jupiter; then you shall not be shoed; but the first false step you make, you may depend upon being severely drubbed."

I cannot guess what may be the fate of Quakerism in America; but I perceive it loses ground daily in England. In all countries, where the established religion is of a mild and tolerating nature, it will at length swallow up all the rest. Quakers cannot sit as representatives in parliament, nor can they enjoy any post or office under the government, because an oath must be always taken on these occasions, and they never swear; so that they are reduced to the necessity of subsisting by traffick. Their children, when enriched by the industry of their parents, become desirous of enjoying honours, and of wearing buttons and ruffles; are ashamed of being called Quakers, and become converts to the church of England, merely to be in the faction.

OF THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND.

ENGLAND is truly the country of sectaries, (*in my father's house there are many mansions.*) An Englishman, in virtue of his liberty, goes to heaven his own way. And yet, notwithstanding that every one is permitted to serve God after his own way, the true religion of the nation, that in which a man makes his fortune, is the sect of Episcopalians, called the Church of England, or simply *the Church*, by way of eminence. No one can possess an employment, either in England or Ireland, unless he be ranked among the orthodox, or a member of the church of England, as by law established. This reason (which carries its conviction with it) has operated so effectually on the minds of dissenters of all persuasions, that not a twentieth part of the nation is out of the pale of the established church.

The English clergy have retained a great number of the ceremonies of the church of Rome; and, in particular, that of receiving, with a most scrupulous exactness, their tithes. They have also the pious ambition of aiming at superiority; for where's the simple curate of a village who would not willingly be pope?

Moreover, they make a religious merit of inspiring their flock with a holy zeal against every one who dissents from their church. This zeal burnt fiercely under the Tories during the four last years of queen Anne's reign; but happily produced no greater mischief than the

breaking the windows of some few meeting-houses: for the rage of religious parties ceased in England with the civil wars, and was under queen Anne no more than the murmurings of a sea, whose billows still heaved, after a violent storm. When the Whigs and the Tories laid waste their native country, in the same manner as the Guelphs and Gibelines formerly did Italy, it was absolutely necessary for both parties to call in religion to their aid. The Tories were for Episcopacy, the Whigs for abolishing it; but when these had got the upper hand, they contented themselves with only abridging it of its power.

At the time when the earl of Oxford and lord Bolingbroke used to drink healths to the Tory cause, the church of England considered these noblemen as defenders of its holy privileges. The lower house of convocation, a kind of house of commons, composed wholly of the clergy, was in some credit at that time; at least, the members of it had the liberty to meet, to discuss ecclesiastical matters; to sentence, from time to time, to the flames, all impious books, that is, books written against themselves. The ministry, which is composed of Whigs at present, does not now so much as allow these gentlemen to assemble; so that they are at this time reduced (in the obscurity of their respective parishes) to the dull occupation of praying for the prosperity of that government, whose tranquility they would not unwillingly disturb.

With respect to the bishops, who are twenty-six in all, they still maintain their seats in the house of lords in spite of the Whigs; because ancient custom, or, if you please, abuse, of con-

sidering them as barons, still subsists. There is a clause, however, in the oath they are obliged to take to the government, that puts these gentlemen's christian patience to a severe trial; namely, that they shall be of the church of England, as by law established. There is hardly a bishop, dean, or other dignitary, but imagines himself so *jure divino*; and consequently it cannot but be a great mortification to them to be obliged to confess, that they owe their dignities to a pitiful law made by a set of profane laymen. A learned monk (father Couayer) wrote a book, not long ago, to prove the validity and succession of English ordinations. This book was forbid in France: but think you the English ministry were pleased with it? No such thing. Those cursed Whigs do not care a straw whether the episcopal succession among them hath been interrupted or not; or whether bishop Parker was consecrated in a tavern*, (as some pretend) or in a church, chusing rather that the bishops should derive their authority from the parliament than from the apostles. Lord B—— observed, that the notion of divine right would only serve to make tyrants in lawn sleeves and rochets; but that the law made citizens.

With respect to the morals of the English clergy, they are more regular than those of France, and for this reason: the clergy, in general, are educated in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, at a distance from the depravity and corruption that are found in the capital. They are not called to the dignities

* Alluding to the Nag's-Head Consecration.

of the church till very late, at a time of life when men are sensible of no other passion but avarice, and their ambition wants a supply. Employments are here bestowed, both in church and army, as the rewards for long services only; and there is hardly any instances of boys being made bishops or colonels, immediately upon their leaving school. Besides, most of the clergy are married. The pedantic airs contracted at the university, and the little commerce men of this profession have with the women, commonly oblige a bishop to confine himself to his own. Clergymen sometimes take a chearful glass at the tavern, because it is the custom so to do; and if they chance to take a cup too much, it is with great sobriety, and without giving the least scandal.

That mixed kind of mortal (not to be defined), who is neither of the clergy nor the laity; in a word, the thing called *abbé* in France, is a species utterly unknown in England. All the clergy here are very much upon the reserve, and most of them pedants. When these are told, that in France young fellows, distinguished for their dissoluteness, and raised to the prelacy by female intrigues, address the Fair publicly in an amorous way, amuse themselves with writing tender songs, entertain their friends splendidly every night at their own houses, and, after the feast is over, withdraw to invoke the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and boldly assume the title of successors to the apostles; when the English, I say, are told these things, they bless God that they are Protestants. But these are shameless heretics, who

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who deserve to fry in hell with all the devils, as master Rabelais says; and, for this reason, I shall trouble myself no more about them.



OF THE PRESBYTERIANS.

THE church of England is confined wholly to England and Ireland, Presbyterianism being the established religion in Scotland. This Presbyterianism is exactly the same with Calvinism, as it was established in France, and is now professed at Geneva. As the priests of this sect receive but very inconsiderable stipends from their churches, and consequently cannot live in the same luxurious manner with bishops, they very naturally exclaim against honours they cannot attain to. Figure to yourself the haughty Diogenes trampling under foot the pride of Plato. The Scotch Presbyterians are not very unlike that proud and beggarly reasoner. Diogenes did not treat Alexander with half the insolence as these treated King Charles II. for when they took up arms in his cause against Cromwell, who had deceived them, they compelled that poor prince to undergo the hearing of three or four sermons every day; would not suffer him to play; reduced him to a state of penance and mortification; insomuch, that Charles very soon grew weary of these pedants, and made his escape from them with as much joy as a youth does from school.

In

In presence of the young, the gay, the sprightly French graduate, who bawls for a whole morning together in the divinity-school, and makes one at a concert in the evening with the ladies, a church of England clergyman is a Cato. But this Cato is a very Jemmy, when compared with a Scotch Presbyterian *. The latter affects a solemn gait, a sour countenance, wears a broad-brimmed hat and a long cloak over a short coat, preaches through the nose, and calls by the name of *Whore of Babylon* all churches where the ministers are so fortunate as to enjoy a good five or six thousand a year, and where the people are weak enough to suffer this, and give them the titles of My Lord, Your Grace, or Your Eminence. These gentlemen, who have also some churches in England, have brought an outside of gravity and austerity in some measure into fashion. To them is owing the sanctification of Sunday in the three kingdoms. People are forbid to work or take any recreation on that day, which is being twice as severe as the Romish church. No operas, plays, or concerts, are allowed in London on Sundays; and even cards are so expressly forbid, that none but persons of quality, and those we call genteel, play on that day; the rest of the nation go either to church, to the tavern, or to a kept mistress's.

Though the Episcopal and Presbyterian sects are the two prevailing ones in Great Britain,

* With respect to the Presbyterians, times are much altered since our author published this description, which, by the bye, seems to have been taken from the Puritans of the last century; at least, we do not remember to have seen such an animal, with a broad beaver and a short coat, covered with a long cloak,

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yet all others are very welcome to come and settle in it, and they live very sociably together, though most of their preachers hate one another, almost as cordially as a Jansenist damns a Jesuit.

Take a view of the Royal Exchange in London, a place more venerable than many courts of justice, where the representatives of all nations meet for the benefit of mankind. There the Jew, the Mahometan, and the Christian, transact business together, as though they were all of the same religion, and give the name of Infidels to none but bankrupts; there the Presbyterian confides in the Anabaptist, and the Churchman depends on the Quaker's word. At the breaking up of this pacific and free assembly, some withdraw to the synagogue, and others to take a glass. This man goes and is baptized in a great tub, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that man has his son's foreskin cut off, and causes a set of Hebrew words (to the meaning of which he himself is an utter stranger) to be mumbled over the infant; others retire to their churches, and there wait the inspiration of heaven with their hats on; and all are satisfied.

If one religion only were allowed in England, the government would very possibly become arbitrary; if there were but two, the people would cut one another's throats; but, as there are such a multitude, they all live happy, and in peace.

Of the SOCINIANS, or ARIANS, or ANTITRINITARIANS.

THERE is a little sect here, composed of clergymen, and a few the most learned of the laity, who neither assume the name of Arians or Socinians, and yet are directly opposite in opinion to St. Athanasius with regard to the Trinity; not scrupling to declare frankly, that the Father is greater than the Son.

Do you remember what is related of a certain orthodox bishop, who, in order to convince an emperor of the reality of consubstantiation, put his hand under the chin of the monarch's son, and gave him a tweak by the nose in presence of his Most Sacred Majesty. The emperor was going to order his attendants to throw the bishop out of the window, when the good old man gave him this polite and convincing reason: "Since your majesty, says he, is angry when your son has not due respect shewn him, what punishment do you think will God the Father inflict on those who refuse his Son Jesus the titles due to him?" The persons I am speaking of declare, that the holy bishop was a rash old fool; that his argument was by no means conclusive; and that his Imperial Majesty should have answered him in this manner: "Learn that there are two ways by which men may be wanting in the respect they owe to me: first, in not doing honour sufficient to my son; and, secondly, in paying him the same honours as to me."

Be

Be this as it will, the principles of Arius began to revive, not only in England, but in Holland and Poland. The celebrated Sir Isaac Newton honoured this opinion so far as to countenance it. This philosopher thought that the Unitarians argued more mathematically than we do; but the most zealous stickler for Arianism is the illustrious Dr. Clark. This man is rigidly virtuous, and of a mild disposition; is more fond of his tenets than desirous of propagating them; and so totally absorbed in problems and calculations, that he is a mere reasoning machine. 'Tis he who wrote a book, which is very much esteemed, and little understood, on the Existence of God; and another, more intelligible indeed, but pretty much contemned, on the Truth of the Christian Religion.

He never engaged in those curious scholastic disputes which our friend calls *venerable Trifles*. He only published a work containing all the testimonies of the primitive ages, for and against the Unitarians, and leaves to the reader the counting of the voices, and the liberty of passing sentence. This book won the doctor a great number of partizans, and lost him the archbishoprick of Canterbury; for when Queen Anne was about to bestow that see on him, a reverend doctor, whose name was Gibson, for certain reasons known to himself, and which were doubtless very good ones, observed to her majesty, that Dr. Clark was undoubtedly the most learned and upright man in the kingdom, and that he wanted only one qualification to be the most deserving object of her majesty's gracious favour. And pray what is that, doctor?

tor? asked the queen. May it please your majesty, to be a Christian, replied the humane and benevolent priest. In my opinion, Dr. Clarke was a little out in his calculation; and had better have been an orthodox primate of all England, than a mere Arian curate.

You see, that opinions are subject to as many revolutions as empires. Arianism, after having triumphed during three centuries, and buried in oblivion for twelve, rises at length out of its own ashes; but it has chosen a very improper time to make its appearance in, the present age being quite cloyed with disputes and sects. The members of this sect are as yet too few to be indulged the liberty of holding public assemblies, which, however, they will doubtless be permitted to do, in case they spread considerably: but people are now-a-days so cold, with respect to all things of this kind, that there is little probability of making a fortune, either in a new religion, or in one revived. Is it not whimsical enough, that Luther, Calvin, and Zwinglius, whose writings no-body now reads, should have founded sects, that are at present spread over a great part of Europe? That Mahomet, though so ignorant, should have given a religion to Asia and Africa? and that Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Locke, Mr. Le Clerc, and others, the greatest philosophers, as well as the ablest writers of their ages, should scarce have been able to raise a better flock. This it is to be born at a proper period of time. Were cardinal de Retz to return again into the world, he would not draw ten women in Paris after him; were Oliver Cromwell, he who beheaded his sovereign, and seized upon the regal dignity,

nity, to rise from the dead, he would be a wealthy city trader, and nothing more*.



OF THE PARLIAMENT.

THE members of the English parliament are fond of comparing themselves, on all occasions, to the old Romans.

Not long since, Mr. Shippen opened a speech in the house of commons with these words: "The majesty of the people of England would be wounded." The singularity of this expression occasioned a loud laugh; but this gentleman, so far from being disconcerted, repeated the same words again with a resolute tone of voice, and the laugh ceased. I must own, I see no resemblance between the majesty of the people of England and that of the Romans, and still less between the two governments. There is in London a senate, some of the members whereof are accused (doubtless very unjustly) of selling their votes, on certain occasions, as was done at Rome; and herein lies the whole resemblance†. In other respects, the two na-

* Probably a Methodist haberdasher.

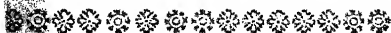
† It would have been no more than justice in our author to own, that the people of England resemble the Romans in their fierce unconquerable spirit, in their unquenchable hate of tyrants, and in their invincible passion for liberty. With respect to religious quarrels, England has been as little harried by them, and perhaps not so much, as any of her-neighbours: nor do we remember one battle ever fought in this kingdom between the Episcopalians and Presbyterians merely on the score of religion.

tions appear to be quite opposite in character, with regard both to good and evil. The Romans never knew the terrible madness of religious wars. This abomination was reserved for devout preachers of patience and humility. Marius and Sylla, Cæsar and Pompey, Anthony and Augustus, did not draw their swords against each other to determine whether the Flamen should wear his shirt over his robe, or his robe over his shirt; or whether the sacred chickens should both eat and drink, or eat only, in order to take the augury. The English have formerly destroyed one another, by sword or halter, for disputes of as trifling a nature. The sects of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians quite turned the heads of these gloomy people for a time: but I believe they will hardly ever be so silly again, as they seem to have grown wiser at their own expence; and I do not perceive the least inclination in them to murder one another any more for mere syllogisms. But who can answer for the follies and prejudices of mankind?

Here follows a more essential difference between Rome and England, which throws the advantage entirely on the side of the latter; namely, that the civil wars of Rome ended in slavery, and those of the English in liberty. The English are the only people upon earth who have been able to prescribe limits to the power of kings by resisting them, and who, by a series of struggles, have at length established that wise and happy form of government where the prince is all-powerful to do good, and at the same time is restrained from committing evil; where the nobles are great without insolence

the PARLIAMENT.

from the dead, he would be a trader, and nothing more*.



THE PARLIAMENT.

Members of the English parliament are comparing themselves, on all occasions, to the old Romans.

Once, Mr. Shippen opened a speech in the House of commons with these words: "The people of England would not be deceived." The singularity of this expression occasioned a loud laugh; but this general remark, from being disconcerted, repeated several times again with a resolute tone of voice, the laugh ceased. I must own, I perceive a resemblance between the majesty of the English and that of the Romans, and between the two governments. In London a senate, some of the members are accused (doubtless very unjustly) of selling their votes, on certain occasions, at Rome; and herein lies the whole difference. In other respects, the two na-

a Methodist haberdasher.

There have been no more than justice in our author's saying that the people of England resemble the Romans, in their unconquerable spirit, in their unquenchable passions, and in their invincible passion for respect: to religious quarrels, England has been carried by them, and perhaps not so much, by their neighbours: nor do we remember one battle fought in this kingdom between the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians, on the score of religion.

tions

tions appear to be quite opposite in character with regard both to good and evil. The Romans never knew the terrible madness of religious wars. This abomination was reserved for devout preachers of patience and humility. Marius and Sylla, Cæsar and Pompey, Augustus and Augustus, did not draw their swords against each other to determine whether the Emperor should wear his shirt over his right breast, or his left over his shirt; or whether the Emperor should both eat and drink, or neither; or whether he should take the augury. The English have formerly destroyed one another, by the sword of battle, for disputes of as trifling a nature. The sects of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians quite turned the heads of these gloomy people for a time: but I believe they will hardly ever be so silly again, as they seem to have grown wiser at their own expence; and I do not perceive the least inclination in them to destroy one another any more for mere religious disputes, who can answer for the follies and passions of mankind?

Here follows a more essential difference between Rome and England, which has been to the advantage entirely on the side of the English, namely, that the civil wars of Rome were for slavery, and those of the English for liberty. The English are the only people, except the Dutch, who have been able to preserve their liberty against the power of kings by resisting them, and who, after a series of struggles, have at length established that wise and happy form of government, in which the prince is all-powerful to do good, and at the same time is restrained from doing evil; where the nobles are great without power.

lence or lordly power, and the people share in the government without confusion.

The house of lords and that of the commons divide the legislative power under the king; but the Romans had no such ballance*. Their Patricians and Plebeians were continually at variance, without any intermediate power to reconcile them. The Roman senate, who were so unjustly, so criminally, formed as to exclude the Plebeians from having any share in the affairs of government, could find no other artifice to effect their design, but by employing them in foreign wars. They considered the people as a wild beast, whom they were to let loose upon their neighbours, for fear they should turn upon their masters. Thus the greatest defects in the government of the Romans was the means of making them conquerors; and, by being unhappy at home, they became masters of the world, till in the end their divisions sunk them into slavery.

The government of England from its nature can never attain to so exalted a pitch †, nor can it ever have so fatal an end. It has not in view the splendid folly of making conquests, but only to prevent their neighbours from conquering. The English are not only jealous of their own liberty, but even of that of other na-

* This is an imaginary ballance; nor do we find from history, that in any parliamentary contest, the king and peers, when joined, were able to counter-balance the power of the commons; yet, while individuals are corruptible, the crown of Britain will always be in possession of the means to secure a majority.

† The success attending the operations of Great Britain in the present war, plainly proves, that the government of England is extremely well calculated for conquest.

tions. The only reason of their quarrels with Lewis XIV. was on account of his ambition.

It has not been without some difficulty that liberty has been established in England, and the idol of arbitrary power has been drowned in seas of blood; nevertheless, the English do not think they have purchased their laws at too high a price. Other nations have shed as much blood; but then the blood they spilt in defence of their liberty, served only to enslave them the more.

That which rises to a revolution in England, is no more than a sedition in other countries. A city in Spain, in Barbary, or in Turkey, takes up arms in defence of its privileges, when immediately it is stormed by mercenary troops; it is punished by executioners, and the rest of the nation kiss their chains. The French think that the government of this island is more tempestuous than the seas which surround it; in which, indeed, they are not mistaken: but then this happens only when the king raises the storm by attempting to seize the ship, of which he is only the pilot. The civil wars of France lasted longer, were more cruel, and productive of greater evils, than those of England: but none of these civil wars had a wise and becoming liberty for their object.

In the detestable times of Charles IX. and Henry III. the whole affair was only, whether the people should be slaves to the Guises. As to the last war of Paris, it deserves only to be hooted at. It makes us think we see a crowd of schoolboys rising up in arms against their master, and afterwards whipped for it. Cardinal de Retz, who was witty and brave, but employed

employed those talents badly ; who was rebellious without a cause, factious without design, and the head of a defenceless party, caballed for the sake of caballing, and seemed to foment the civil war for his own amusement and pastime. The parliament did not know what he aimed at, nor what he did not aim at. He levied troops, and the next instant cashiered them : he threatened ; he begged pardon ; he set a price on Cardinal Mazarin's head, and afterwards made him his congratulations in a public manner. Our civil wars under Charles VI. were bloody and cruel, those of the League execrable, and that of the Frondeurs* ridiculous.

That for which the French chiefly reproach the English nation, is the murder of king Charles I. a prince who merited a better fate, and whom his subjects treated just as he would have treated them, had he been powerful and at ease. After all, consider, on one side, Charles I. defeated in a pitched battle, imprisoned, tried, sentenced to die in Westminster-hall, and then beheaded ; and, on the other, the emperor Henry VII. poisoned by his chaplain in receiving the sacrament ; Henry III. of France stabbed by a monk ; thirty different plots contrived to assassinate Henry IV. several of them put in execution, and the last depriving that great-monarch of his life. Weigh, I say, all these wicked attempts, and then judge.

* As this name has occurred frequently in the course of this work, especially in the historical part, it may not be improper to inform the reader, that *Frondeurs*, in its proper sense, signifies *Slingers*, and figuratively *cavillers*, or lovers of contradiction ; and was a name given to a party that opposed the French ministry under cardinal Mazarin in 1648.

ON THE

ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

THIS mixture of different departments in the government of England, this harmony between the king, lords, and commons, has not always subsisted. England was for a long time in a state of slavery, having, at different periods, wore the yoke of the Romans, Saxons*, Danes, and, last of all, the Normans. William the Conqueror in particular governed them with a rod of iron. He disposed of the goods and lives of his new subjects like an eastern tyrant: he forbid, under pain of death, any Englishman to have either fire or light in his house after eight o'clock at night†. Whether it was that he intended by this edict to prevent their holding any assemblies in the night, or that, by so whimsical a prohibition, he had a mind to try to what a degree of abjectness men might be subjected by their fellow-creatures. It is, however, certain the English had parliaments both before and since the time of William the Conqueror; they still boast of them, as if the assemblies which then bore the title of Parliaments, and which were composed of the ec-

* The English were absolutely free under the Saxon government, to which indeed they owe the best privileges they now enjoy.

† The English doubtless complained of this regulation, which, however, was common in all the kingdoms of the continent, where the houses, being built of wood, were the more subject to conflagration.

clerical tyrants and of the barons *, had been actually the guardians of their liberties, and the preservers of the public felicity.

These Barbarians, who poured like a torrent from the shores of the Baltic, and over-ran all the east of Europe, brought the use of these estates or parliaments, which are the subject of so much noise, though very little known, along with them. It is true, kings were not then despotic, which is precisely the reason why the people groaned under so intolerable a yoke. The chiefs of those barbarians, who had ravaged France, Italy, Spain, and England, made themselves monarchs. Their captains divided and shared with them the lands of the conquered; hence those margraves, lairds, barons, with all that gang of petty tyrants who have often disputed with sovereigns, who were not firmly fixed on their thrones, the spoils and plunder of the people. It was so many birds of prey fighting with an eagle, that they might suck the blood of the doves; and every nation, instead of one good and indulgent master, which might have happened to their share, had a hundred of those blood-sucking monsters. Presently after priest-craft began to mingle in civil matters; from the earliest antiquity, the fate of the Gauls, Germans, and inhabitants of Great Britain, depended on the Druids, and on the heads of their villages, an ancient kind of barons, tho' a less tyrannical sort than their predecessors. These Druids called themselves Mediators between Men and the Deity: it was

* Our author is here mistaken. Every free man had a seat in the *Micklegemot*, or great assembly of the Saxons, where every law received its final sanction.

they who made laws, excommunicated, and, lastly, punished criminals with death. The bishops succeeded by imperceptible degrees to their temporal authority in the Gothic and Vandal government. The popes put themselves at their head, and with their briefs, *bulls, and their other more mischievous instruments, the monks, made kings tremble on their thrones, deposed or assassinated them at pleasure, and, in a word, drew to themselves all the treasure of Europe. The weak Ina *, one of the tyrants of the English heptarchy, was the first who, in a pilgrimage which he made to Rome, submitted to pay *Peter's pence* (about a French crown, or half crown sterling nearly) for every house in his kingdom. The whole island presently followed this example; England became insensibly a province to the pope; and the holy father sent thither, from time to time, his legates to levy extraordinary impositions. At last John, surnamed Sans Terre, or Lack Land, made a formal cession of his kingdom to his holiness, who had excommunicated him. The barons, who were by no means gainers by this proceeding, expelled this wretched prince, and set up in his place Lewis VIII. father to St. Lewis king of France; but they were presently

* Ina, sovereign of Essex, and afterwards declared monarch of the Anglo Saxons, was the most illustrious of all the kings who had reigned in this country. He compiled a body of laws, which served as the ground-work of those published by Alfred. The only weak part of his character was an unkingly spirit of devotion, which prompted him to abdicate the throne: but he was not blameable for the establishment of Peter-pence, which was originally no other than an elymosinary donation for the support of the English college built by him at Rome.

disgusted with this new monarch, and then compelled him to cross the seas again.

Whilst the barons, with the bishops and popes, were tearing all England to pieces, where each of them would fain have ruled, the people, that is to say, the most numerous, the most useful, and even the most virtuous part of mankind, composed of those who addict themselves to the study of the laws and of the sciences, of merchants, mechanics, and, in a word, of labourers, that first and most despised of all professions; the people, I say, was considered by them as animals of a nature inferior to the rest of the human species. The commons were then far from enjoying the least share in the government: they were then villains or slaves, whose labour, and even whose blood, was the property of their masters, who called themselves the Nobility. Far the greatest part of the human species were in Europe, what they still are in several parts of the world, the slaves of some lord, and at best but a kind of cattle, which they bought and sold with their lands. It was the work of ages to render justice to humanity, and to find out what a horrible thing it was, that the many should sow whilst a few did reap: and is it not the greatest happiness for the French, that the authority of those petty tyrants has been extinguished by the lawful authority of our sovereign, and in England by that of the king and nation conjointly?

Happily in those shocks which the quarrels of kings and great men gave to empires, the chains of nations have been relaxed more or less. Liberty in England has arisen from the quarrels of tyrants. The barons forced *John*

Sans Terre and Henry III. to grant that famous charter, the principal scope of which was in fact to make kings dependant on the lords ; but, at the same time, the rest of the nation were favoured, that they might side with their pretended protectors. This great charter, which is looked upon as the palladium and the consecrated fountain of the public liberty, is itself a proof how little that liberty was understood : the very title * sets it beyond all doubt, that the king thought himself absolute, *de jure* ; and that the barons, and even the clergy, forced him to relinquish this pretended right, only because they were stronger than he. It begins in this manner : “ We, of our free will, grant the following privileges to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, and barons of our kingdom,” &c. In the articles of this charter there is not one word said of the house of commons ; a proof that no such house then existed ; or, if it did, that its power was next to nothing. In this the

* M. de Voltaire seems to have considered this subject superficially. The two great charters were no other than a confirmation and augmentation of those rights and privileges which the English had enjoyed under the Saxon monarchs ; to the maintenance of which, indeed, all the kings since the Conquest had sworn, at or after their coronation. The expression of “ we grant of our free will,” &c. implies no more than his voluntary compliance with the demands of the barons. They demanded such privileges as their right, and he declared he granted them freely. The most essential articles of the great charter were these : “ No freeman shall be taken, imprisoned, or disseized of his freehold, liberties, or free customs, but by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by legal process.—Amerciaments shall be proportioned to the offence and circumstances of the offender, so as not to affect his landed estate, or disable him from following his vocation ; but be rated by a verdict of twelve creditable men in the neighbourhood.”

78 OF the ENGLISH CONSTITUTION.

free men of England are specified ; a melancholy proof that there were then some who were not so. We see, by the thirty-second article, that those pretended free men owed their lords certain servitude. Such a liberty as this smelled very rank of slavery. By the twenty-first article, the king ordains, that from henceforth officers shall be restrained from forcibly seizing the horses and carriages of free men, except on paying for the same. This regulation was considered by the people as real liberty, because it destroyed a most intolerable kind of tyranny. Henry VII. that fortunate conqueror and politician, who pretended to cherish the barons, whom he both feared and hated, bethought himself of the project of alienating their lands. By this means the villains, who afterwards acquired property by their industry, bought the castles of the great lords, who had ruined themselves by their extravagance ; and by degrees all the estates almost in the kingdom changed masters.

The house of commons became every day more powerful ; the families of the ancient peerage became extinct in time ; and as, in the rigour of the law, there is no other nobility in England besides the peers, the whole order would have been annihilated, had not the kings created new barons from time to time ; and this expedient preserved the body of the peers they had formerly so much dreaded, in order to oppose the house of commons, now grown too powerful. All the new peers, which form the upper house, receive nothing besides their titles from the crown ; scarce any of them possessing the lands from whence those titles are derived. The duke of Dorset, for example, is one of them,

them, though he possesses not a foot of land in Dorsetshire; another shall be earl of a village, who hardly knows in what quarter of the island such a village lies. They only have a certain power in parliament, and no where out of it, which, with some few privileges, is all they enjoy.

Here is no such thing as the distinction of high, middle, and low justice in France; nor of the right of hunting on the lands of a citizen, who has not the liberty of firing a single shot of a musket on his own estate.

A peer or nobleman in this country pays his share of the taxes as others do, all of which are regulated by the house of commons; which house, if it is second only in rank, is the first in point of credit. The lords and bishops, it is true, may reject any bill of the commons, when it regards the raising of money; but are not entitled to make the smallest amendment in it: they must either pass it or throw it out, without any restriction whatever. When the bill is confirmed by the lords, and approved of by the king, then every person is to pay his quota without distinction; and that not according to his rank or quality, which would be absurd, but in proportion to his revenue. Here is no *taille*, or arbitrary poll-tax, but a real tax on lands; all of which underwent an actual valuation under the famous William III. The taxes subsist always the same, notwithstanding the value of lands has risen; so that no one is stripped to the bone, nor of consequence can there be any ground of complaint: the feet of the peasant are not tortured with wooden shoes; he eats the best wheaten bread, is well and warmly cloth-

ed, and is in no apprehensions on account of the increase of his herds and flocks, or terrified into a thatched house, instead of a convenient slated roof, for fear of an augmentation of the *taille* the year following. There are even a number of peasants, or, if you will, farmers, who have from five to six hundred pounds sterling yearly income, and who are not above cultivating those fields which have enriched them, and where they enjoy the greatest of all human blessings, liberty.



OF THEIR COMMERCE.

NEVER has any people, since the fall of Carthage, been at the same time powerful by sea and land, till Venice shewed the example. The Portuguese, from their good fortune in discovering the passage by way of the Cape of Good Hope, have been for some time great lords on the coasts of the East Indies, but have never been very respectable in Europe. Even the United Provinces became warlike, contrary to their natural disposition, and in spite of themselves; and it can in no sort be ascribed to their union among themselves, but to their being united with England, that they have contributed to hold the balance in Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Carthage, Venice, and Amsterdam, were undoubtedly powerful; but their conduct has been exactly like that of merchants grown rich by traffic, who afterwards purchase lands with the

the dignity of lordship annexed to them. Neither Carthage, nor Venice, nor Holland have, from a warlike and even conquering beginning, ended in a commercial nation. The English are the only people existing who have done this: they were a long while warriors before they learned to cast accounts. They were entirely ignorant of numbers when they won the battles of Agincourt, Cressy, and Poictiers, and were likewise ignorant that it was in their power to become corn-factors and woollen-drapers, two things that would certainly turn to much better account. This science alone has rendered the nation at once populous, wealthy, and powerful. London was a poor country-town when Edward III. conquered one half of France; and it is wholly owing to this that the English have become merchants; that London exceeds Paris in extent, and number of inhabitants; that they are able to equip and man two hundred sail of ships of war, and keep the kings their allies in pay. The Scotch are a people born warriors, and who, from the purity of their air, inherit good sense. Whence comes it then that Scotland, under the name of an *Union*, is become a province to England? It is because Scotland* has scarce any other commodity than coal, and that England has fine tin, excellent wool, and
abounds.

* Scotland is by nature surprisingly adapted to the growth of commerce and manufacture. Besides coal, her mountains afford inexhaustible mines of lead, iron, and copper. Her hills and vallies produce excellent pasturage, for black cattle and sheep; her soil is capable of raising hemp, flax, and corn; her seas teem with myriads of fish for food and
E 5. exportation;

abounds in corn, manufactures, and trading companies.

When Lewis XIV. made Italy tremble, and his armies, already in possession of Savoy and Piedmont, were on the point of reducing Turin, prince Eugene was obliged to march from the remotest parts of Germany to the assistance of the duke of Savoy. He was in want of money, without which cities can neither be taken nor defended. He had recourse to the English merchants. In half an hour's time they lent him five millions, with which he effected the deliverance of Turin, beat the French, and wrote this short note to those who had lent him the money: "Gentlemen, I have received your money, and flatter myself I have employed it to your satisfaction." This gives an Englishman a kind of pride, which is extremely well founded, and causes him, not without reason, to compare himself to a citizen of Rome. Thus the younger son of a peer of the realm is not above traffic. My lord Townshend, secretary of state, has a brother who is satisfied with being a merchant in the city. At the time when my lord Oxford ruled all England, his younger brother was a factor at Aleppo, whence he could never be prevailed on to return, and where he died. This custom, which is now unhappily beginning to be laid aside, appears monstrous to a German, whose

exportation; her coast abounds with the best harbours in Europe; and her situation between the Atlantic and German oceans is peculiarly favourable to foreign trade: her subordination to England was the natural consequence of her adjoining to a more populous, wealthy, industrious, and united people.

head is full of the coats of arms and pageants of his family. They can never conceive how it is possible the son of an English peer should be no more than a rich and powerful citizen, whilst in Germany they are all princes. I have known above thirty highnesses of the same name, whose whole fortunes and estate put together amounted to a few coats of arms, and the starving pride they inherited from their ancestors.

In France every body is a marquis; and a man just come from the obscurity of some remote province, with money in his pocket, and a name that ends with an *ac* or an *ille*, may give himself airs, and usurp such phrases as, *A man of my quality and rank!* and hold merchants in the most sovereign contempt. The merchant again, by dint of hearing his profession despised on all occasions, at last is fool enough to blush at his condition. I will not, however, take upon me to say which is the most useful to his country, and which of the two ought to have the preference; whether the powdered lord, who knows to a minute when the king rises or goes to bed, perhaps to stool, and who gives himself airs of importance in playing the part of a slave in the antichamber of some minister; or the merchant, who enriches his country, and from his counting-house sends his orders into Surat or Cairo, thereby contributing to the happiness and convenience of human nature.

O N
I N O C U L A T I O N
O F T H E
S M A L L - P O X.

THE rest of Europe, that is, the Christian part of it, very gravely assert that the English are fools and madmen; fools, in communicating the contagion of the small-pox to their children, in order to hinder them from being subject to that dangerous and loathsome disorder; madmen, in wantonly exposing their children to this pestilence, with design to prevent a contingent evil. The English, on their side, call the rest of Europe unnatural and cowardly; unnatural, in leaving their children exposed to almost certain death by the small-pox; and cowardly, in fearing to give their children a trifling matter of pain from a purpose so noble and so evidently useful. In order to determine which of the two are in the right, I shall now relate the history of this famous practice, which is in France the subject of so much dread.

The women of Circassia have from time immemorial been accustomed to give their children the small-pox, even as early as at six months old, by making an incision in the arm, and afterwards inserting in this incision a pustule carefully

carefully taken from the body of some other child. This pustule so insinuated produces in the body of the patient the same effect that leaven does in a piece of dough; that is, it ferments in it, and communicates to the mass of blood the qualities with which it is impregnated. The pustules of the child infected in this manner serve to convey the same disease to others. This disorder therefore is perpetually circulating through the different parts of Circassia; and when, unluckily, there is no infection of the small-pox in the country, it creates the same uneasiness as a dearth, or an unhealthy season, would have occasioned.

What has given rise to this custom in Circassia, and which is so extraordinary to other nations, is, however, a cause common to them with all the nations on the face of the earth; that is, the tenderness* of mothers, and motives of interest. The Circassians are poor, but have handsome daughters; which, accordingly, is the principal article of their foreign commerce. It is they who furnish beauties for the seraglios of the grand signior, the sophi of Persia, and others who are rich enough to purchase and to maintain these precious commodities. These people bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that is, in virtuous and honourable principles, which contain the whole science of wheedling the male part of the creation; the art of dancing, with gestures expressive of uncommon effeminacy and lasciviousness; and lastly, that of rekindling,

* This is a strange effect of maternal tenderness, to breed up their children for sale.

by the most bewitching artifices, the exhausted appetites of those haughty lords to whom their fates have destined them. These poor creatures repeat their lesson every day with their mothers, in the same manner as our girls do their catechism; that is, without understanding a single syllable of what is taught them. Now it often happened, that a father and mother, after having taken an infinite deal of pains in giving their children a good education, are all of a sudden frustrated of their hopes. The small-pox getting into the family, one daughter perhaps died; another lost an eye; a third recovered, but with a disfigured nose; so that here was an honest couple ruined past all remedy. Often too an entire stagnation of all kind of commerce has ensued, and that for several years running, when the disorder happened to be epidemical, to the no small detriment of the seraglios of Turkey and Persia.

A commercial people are always exceedingly vigilant with regard to their interest, and never neglect those pieces of knowledge that may be of use in the carrying on their traffic. The Circassians found, that upon computation, in a thousand persons there were hardly one that was ever twice seized with the small-pox completely formed; that there had been instances of a person's having had a slight touch of the small-pox, or something resembling it, but there never were any two relapses known to be dangerous: in short, that in fact the same person has never been known to have been twice infected with this disorder. They further remark, that when the disease is mild, and the breaking out has only to pierce through
a thin

a thin and delicate skin, they leave no sort of mark on the face behind them. From these natural observations they concluded, that if a child of six months or a year old was to have a mild kind of the small-pox, that not only the child would certainly survive, but would get the better of it without so much as bearing any marks of it, and would assuredly be quit of it during the remainder of its life. From hence it followed of course, that their only method would be to communicate the disorder to their children betimes, which they did, by insinuating into the child's body a pustule taken from the body of one infected with the small-pox, the most completely formed, and at the same time the most favourable kind that could be found. The experiment could scarce possibly fail. The Turks *, a very sensible people, soon adopted this practice; and, at this day, there is scarce a bashaw in Constantinople who does not inoculate his children while they are at the breast.

There are some who pretend the Circassians formerly learned this custom from the Arabians. We will leave this point in history to be elucidated by some learned Benedictine, who will not fail to compose several volumes in folio upon the subject, together with the necessary vouchers. All I have to say of the matter is, that in the beginning of the reign of George I. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, one of the most celebrated ladies in England for her strong and solid good sense, happening to be with her

* The Turks never adopted the practice of inoculation, if we may depend upon the latest and best accounts received from Constantinople.

husband at Constantinople, resolved without any kind of difficulty to give the small-pox to a child she had had in that country. In vain did her chaplain remonstrate that this practice was by no means consistent with Christian principles, and could only be expected to succeed with infidels; my lady Wortley's son recovered, and was presently as well as could be wished. This lady, on her return to London, communicated the experiment she had made to the princess of Wales *, now queen of Great Britain. It must be acknowledged that, setting crowns and titles aside, this princess is certainly born for the encouragement of arts, and for the good of the human race, to whom she is a generous benefactor: She is an amiable philosopher seated on a throne, who has improved every opportunity of instruction, and who has never let slip any occasion of shewing her innate generosity. It is she who on hearing that a daughter of Milton was still living, and in extreme misery, immediately sent her a considerable present; she it is, who encourages the celebrated father Courayer; in a word, it is she who deigned to become the mediatrix between doctor Clarke and Mr. Leibnitz †. As soon as she heard of inoculation for the small-pox, she caused an experiment of it to be tried on four criminals under sentence of death, who were thus doubly indebted to her for their lives: for she not only rescued them from the gallows, but, by means of this artificial kind

* The late Queen Caroline.

† Leibnitz attacked the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton, which was defended by Dr. Clarke.

of the small-pox, prevented them from having it in the natural way, which they, in all human probability, would have had, and of which they might have died in a more advanced age. The princess, thus assured of the utility of this proof, caused her own children to be inoculated. All England, or rather Britain, followed her example; so that from that time at least six thousand children stand indebted for their lives to Lady Mary Wortley Montague, as do all the fair of the island for preserving their beauty.

In an hundred persons that come into the world, at least sixty are found to catch the small-pox; of these sixty, twenty are known to die in the most favourable times, and twenty more wear very disagreeable marks of this cruel disorder as long as they live. Here is then a fifth part of the human species assuredly killed, or, at least, horribly disfigured. Among the vast numbers inoculated in Great Britain, or in Turkey, none are ever known to die, except such as were in a very ill state of health, or given over before. No one is marked with it, no one is ever infected a second time, supposing the inoculation to be perfect, that is, to have taken place as it ought. It is therefore certain, that, had some French lady imported this secret from Constantinople into Paris, she would have rendered an inestimable and everlasting piece of service to the nation. The duke de Villequier, father to the present duke d'Aumont, a nobleman of the most robust constitution, would not have been cut off in the flower of his age; the prince de Soubise, who enjoyed the
most

most remarkable state of good health ever known, would not have been carried off at five and twenty; nor would *Monsieur*, the grandfather of Lewis XV. been laid in his grave by it in his fiftieth year. The twenty thousand persons who died at Paris in 1723 would have been now alive. What shall we say then? Is it that the French set a lower value upon life? or are the ladies of France less anxious about the preservation of their charms? It is true, and it must be acknowledged, we are a very odd kind of people! It is possible, that in ten years we may think of adopting this British custom, provided the doctors and curates, allow us this indulgence; or, perhaps, the French will inoculate their children, out of mere whim and maggot, should those islanders leave it off, from their natural inconstancy*.

I learn that the Chinese have practised this custom these two hundred years last past; the example of a nation that has the first character in point of natural good sense, as well as of their excellent internal police, is a strong prejudice in its favour. It is true, the Chinese follow a method peculiar to themselves; they make no incision, but take the small-pox up the nose in powder, just as we do a pinch of snuff: this method is more pleasant, but amounts to much the same thing, and serves equally to prove, that had inoculation been practised in France, it must assuredly have saved the lives of thousands.

* This chapter is taken from a letter written in 1727. the rest has been added since that time.

It is some years since a Jesuit missionary having read this chapter, and being in a province of America, where the small-pox makes horrible ravages, bethought himself of causing all the Indian children he baptized to be inoculated, so that they are indebted to him not only for this present life, but also for life eternal at the same time: what inestimable gifts for savages!

The bishop of Worcester has lately preached up the doctrine of inoculation at London; he has proved, like a good citizen and patriot, what a vast number of subjects this practice preserves to a nation; a doctrine which he has also enforced by such arguments as might be expected from a pastor and a Christian. They would preach at Paris against this salutary invention, as they wrote twenty years ago against Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy: in short, every thing contributes to prove that the English are greater philosophers, and possessed of more courage than we. It will require a considerable space of time before a true spirit of reason and a particular boldness of sentiment, will be able to make their way over the Straits of Dover.

It must not, however, be imagined, that no persons are to be met with from the Orkneys to the South Foreland but philosophers; the other species will always form the greatest number. Inoculation was at first opposed in London; and a great while before the bishop of Worcester preached this gospel from the pulpit, a certain curate had taken it into his head to declaim against this practice: he told his congregation, that Job had certainly been inoculated by the devil. This man spoiled a good Capuchin,

Capuchin, for which nature seems to have intended him; he was certainly unworthy the honour of being born in this island. So we see prejudice, as usual, first got possession of the pulpit, and reason could not reach it till long after; this is no more than the common progress of the human mind.



ON CHANCELLOR BACON.

IT is not long since that ridiculous and threadbare question was agitated in a celebrated assembly; who was the greatest man, whether Cæsar or Alexander, Tamerlane or Cromwell. Somebody made answer, that it must undoubtedly be Sir Isaac Newton. This man was certainly in the right; for if true greatness consists in having received from heaven the advantage of a superior genius, with the talent of applying it for the interest of the possessor and of mankind, a man like Mr. Newton, and such an one is hardly to be met with in ten centuries, is surely by much the greatest; and those statesmen and conquerors which no age has ever been without, are commonly but so many illustrious villains. It is the man who sways our minds by the prevalence of reason, and the native force of truth, not they who reduce mankind to a state of slavery by brutish force and downright violence; the man who by the vigour of his mind, is able to penetrate into the hidden secrets of nature, and
whole

whose capacious soul can contain the vast frame of the universe, not those who lay nature waste, and desolate the face of the earth, that claims our reverence and admiration.

Therefore, as you are desirous to be informed of the great men that England has produced, I shall begin with the Bacons, the Lockes, and the Newtons, &c. The generals and ministers will come after them in their turn.

I must begin with the celebrated baron of Verulam, known to the rest of Europe by the name of Bacon, who was the son of a certain keeper of the seals, and was for a considerable time chancellor under James I. Notwithstanding the intrigues and bustle of a court, and the occupations incident to his office, which would have required his whole attention, he found means to become a great philosopher, a good historian, and an elegant writer; and what is yet more wonderful is, that he lived in an age where the art of writing was totally unknown, and where sound philosophy was still less so. This personage, as is the way amongst mankind, was more valued after his death than whilst he lived. His enemies were courtiers residing at London, whilst his admirers consisted wholly of foreigners. When the marquis d'Effiat brought the princess Mary, daughter to Henry the Great, over to be married to king Charles, this minister paid Bacon a visit, who being then confined to a sick bed, received him with close curtains. "You are like the angels," said d'Effiat to him; "we hear much talk of them, and whilst every body thinks them superior to men, we are never favoured with a sight of them."

You

You have been told in what manner Bacon was accused of a crime which is very far from being the sin of a philosopher*; of being corrupted by pecuniary gifts; and how he was sentenced by the house of peers to pay a fine of about four hundred thousand livres of our money, besides losing his office of chancellor, and being degraded from the rank and dignity of a peer. At present the English revere his memory to such a degree as, with great difficulty, to allow him to have been in the least guilty. Should you ask me what I think of it, I will make use of a saying I heard from Lord Bolingbroke. They happened to be talking of the avarice with which the duke of Marlborough had been taxed, and quoted several instances of it, for the truth of which they appealed to Lord Bolingbroke, who, as being of a contrary party, might perhaps, without any trespass against the laws of decorum, freely say what he thought. "He was," said he, "so great a man that I do not recollect whether he had any faults or no." I shall therefore confine myself to let you know what these qualities are which have

* Lord Verulam being committed to the Tower, and conscious of that corruption which was laid to his charge, presented a petition to the house of peers, confessing himself guilty, and requesting that he might not be exposed to the shame of a public trial. He was deprived of his office of chancellor; rendered incapable of sitting in the upper house of parliament; fined in forty thousand pounds; and condemned to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure. James, in consideration of his great genius, remitted his fine, released him from prison, and indulged him with a very considerable pension. After all, the crime laid to his charge was rather the effect of weakness and inattention, than owing to a vicious heart or sordid disposition.

acquired chancellor Bacon the esteem of all Europe.

The most singular, as well as the most excellent of all his works, is that which is now the least read, and at the same time the most useful; I mean his *Novum Scientiarum Organum*. This is the scaffold by means of which the edifice of the new philosophy has been reared; so that when the building was compleated, the scaffold was no longer of any use. Chancellor Bacon was still unacquainted with nature, but he perfectly knew, and pointed out extraordinary well, all the paths which lead to her recesses. He had very early despised what those square-cap'd fools teach in those dungeons called *Colleges*, under the name of philosophy, and did every thing in his power that those bodies, instituted for the cultivation and perfecting the human understanding, might cease any longer to mar it, by their *quiddities*, their *horrors of a vacuum*, their *substantial forms*, with the rest of that jargon which ignorance and a nonsensical jumble of religion had consecrated.

This great man is the father of experimental philosophy. It is true, wonderful discoveries had been made even before his time; the mariner's compass, the art of printing, that of engraving, the art of painting in oil, that of making glass, with the remarkably advantageous invention of restoring in some measure sight to the blind; that is, to old men, by means of spectacles; the secret of making gunpowder, &c. had been already discovered. They had gone in search of, discovered, and conquered a new world in another hemisphere. Who would not have thought that these sublime discoveries had

had been made by the greatest philosophers, and in times much more enlightened than ours?

- By no means; for all these astonishing revolutions happened in the ages of scholastic barbarity. Chance alone has brought forth almost all these inventions; it is even pretended, that chance has had a great share in the discovery of America; at least, it has been believed that Christopher Columbus undertook this voyage on the faith of a captain of a ship who had been cast by a storm on one of the Caribbee islands. Be this as it will, men had learned to penetrate to the utmost limits of the habitable globe, and to destroy the most impregnable cities with an artificial thunder, much more terrible than the real; but they were still ignorant of the circulation of the blood, the weight and pressure of the air, the laws of motion, the doctrine of light and colour, the number of the planets in our system, &c. And a man that was capable to maintain a thesis on the *Categories of Aristotle*, the *universale a parte rei*, or such-like nonsense, was considered as a prodigy.

The most wonderful and useful inventions are by no means those which do most honour to the human mind. And it is to a certain mechanical instinct, which subsists in almost every man, that we owe far the greater part of the arts, and in no manner whatever to philosophy. The discovery of fire, the arts of making bread, of melting and working metals, of building houses, the invention of the shuttle, are infinitely more useful than printing and the compass; notwithstanding, all these were invented by men who were still in a state of barbarity. What astonishing things have the
Greeks

Greeks and Romans since done in mechanics? Yet men believed, in their time, that the heavens were of chrystal, and the stars were so many small lamps, that sometimes fell into the sea; and one of their greatest philosophers, after many researches, had at length discovered that the stars were so many pebbles, that had flown off like sparks from the earth.

In a word, there was not a man who had any idea of experimental philosophy before chancellor Bacon; and of an infinity of experiments which have been made since his time, there is hardly a single one which has not been pointed out in his book. He had even made a good number of them himself. He constructed several sorts of pneumatical machines, by which he discovered the elasticity of the air; he had long brooded over the discovery of its weight, and was even at times very near catching it, when it was laid hold of by Torricelli. A short time after, experimental physicks began, at the same instant, to be cultivated in almost all parts of Europe. This was a hidden treasure of which Bacon had some glimmerings, and which all the philosophers whom his promises had encouraged, made their utmost efforts to lay open: We see in his book mention made in express terms of that new attraction of which Mr. Newton passes for the inventor. "We must enquire," said Bacon, "whether there be not a certain magnetical force, which operates reciprocally between the earth and other heavy bodies, between the moon and the ocean, between the planets, &c." In another place he says, "Either heavy bodies are impelled towards the center of the earth, or they are mu-
F tually

tually attracted by it; in this latter case it is evident, that the nearer falling bodies approach the earth, the more forcibly are they attracted by it. We must try, continues he, whether the same pendulum clock goes faster on the top of a mountain, or at the bottom of a mine. If the force of the weight diminish on the mountain, and increase in the mine, it is probable the earth has a real attracting quality."

This precursor in philosophy was also an elegant writer, an historian, and a wit. His moral essays are in high estimation, though they seem rather calculated to instruct than to please; and as they are neither a satire on human nature, like the maxims of Rochefoucault, nor a school of scepticism, like Montagne, they are not so much read as these two ingenious books. His life of Henry VII. passed for a master-piece; but how is it possible some people should have been idle enough to compare so small a work with the history of our illustrious M. de Thou? Speaking of that famous impostor Perkins, son of a Jew convert, who assumed so boldly the name of Richard IV. king of England, being encouraged by the duchess of Burgundy, and who disputed the crown with Henry VII. he expresses himself in these terms: "About this time king Henry was beset with evil spirits, by the witchcraft of the duchess of Burgundy, who conjured up from hell the ghost of Edward IV. in order to torment king Henry. When the duchess of Burgundy had instructed Perkins, she began to consider with herself in what region of the heavens she should make this comet shine, and resolved immediately that it should make its appearance in the horizon of Ireland." I think
our

our sage de Thou seldom gives into this gallimaufry, which used formerly to pass for the sublime, but which at present is known by its proper title, the *bombast*.



O N L O C K E.

THERE surely never was a more solid and more methodical understanding, nor a more acute and accurate logician than Locke, though he was far from being an excellent mathematician. He never could bring himself to undergo the drudgery of calculation, nor the dryness of mathematical truths, which offer no sensible image to the understanding: and no one has more fully evinced than he has done, that a man, without the smallest assistance from geometry, might still possess the most geometrical intellect possible. The great philosophers before his time, had made no difficulties in determining the essence or substance of the human soul; but as they were wholly ignorant of the matter, it was but reasonable they should be all of them of different opinions.

In Greece, which was at one the cradle of arts, and of errors, where the greatness and folly of the human mind were pushed to so great a height, they reasoned on the soul exactly as we do. The divine Anaxagoras, who had altars erected to him, for teaching men that the sun was bigger than the Peloponnesus, that snow was black, that the sky was of stone, affirmed that

the soul was an aerial spirit, though immortal. Diogenes, a different person from him, who became afterwards a Cynic from a counterfeiter of money, asserted, that the soul was a portion of the substance of God; a notion which had at least something striking. Epicurus maintains the soul is composed of parts in the same manner as matter. Aristotle, whose works have been interpreted a thousand different ways, because they were in fact absolutely unintelligible, was of opinion, if we may trust some of his disciples, that the understandings of all mankind were but one and the same substance. The divine Plato, master to the divine Aristotle, and the divine Socrates, master to the divine Plato, said, that the soul was at the same time corporeal and eternal. The demon of Socrates had, no doubt, let him into the secret of this matter. There are actually some who pretend, that a fellow who boasted of having a familiar, was most assuredly either knave, or fool; possibly they who say so may be rather too squeamish.

As for our fathers of the church, several of them, in the first ages, were of opinion that the human soul, as well as the angels and God himself, were all corporeal. The world is every day improving. St. Bernard, as father Mabillon is forced to own, taught, with respect to the soul, that after death it did not behold God in heaven, but was obliged to rest satisfied with conversing with the humanity of Jesus Christ. Possibly they took it for once on his bare word; though the adventure of the crusade has somewhat lessened the credit of his oracles: Whole
drones

drones of schoolmen came after him : there was the irrefragable doctor*, the subtil doctor†, the angelic doctor§, the seraphic doctor||, the cherubimical doctor, all of whom made no scruple of saying they were perfectly clear as to the soul's substance, but who have, for all that, spoken of it exactly as if they neither understood one syllable of what they spoke of, and wanted that nobody else should. Our Descartes, born to discover the mistakes of antiquity, only that he might substitute his own in their place, and bore down by the stream of system, which hoodwinks the greatest men, imagined he had demonstrated, that the soul was the same thing with thought, in the same manner as matter is the same with extension. He firmly maintained, that the soul always thinks, and that at its arrival in the body, it is provided with a whole magazine of metaphysical notions, as of God, space, infinity, and fully supplied with all sorts of abstract ideas, which it unhappily loses the moment it comes forth from its mother's womb. Father Mallebranche, of the oratory, in his sublime illusions, admits of no such thing as innate ideas, though he made no manner of doubt of our seeing every thing in God; and that God himself, if it is lawful to speak in this manner, was the very essence of our soul.

After so many speculative gentlemen had formed this romance of the soul, one truly wise man appeared, who has, in the most modest manner imaginable, given us its real history. Mr. Locke has laid open to man the anatomy of his own

* Hales. † Scot. § Thomas. || Bonaventure.

soul, just as some learned anatomist would have done that of the body. He avails himself throughout of the help of metaphysical lights; and altho' he is sometimes bold enough to speak in a positive manner, he is on other occasions not afraid to discover doubts. Instead of determining at once what we were entirely ignorant about, he examines, step by step, the objects of human knowledge; he takes a child from the moment of its birth; he accompanies him through all the stages of the human understanding; he views what he possesses in common with the brutes, and in what he is superior to them. Above all, he is solicitous to examine the internal evidence of consciousness. "I leave, says he, those who are possessed of more knowledge than I am, to determine whether our souls exists before or after the organization of the body; but cannot help acknowledging that the soul that has fallen to my share, is one of those coarse material kinds of souls which cannot always think; and I am even so unhappy as not to be able to conceive how it should be more indispensably necessary that the soul should always think, than it should be that the body should always be in motion."

For my own share, I am proud of the honour of being every whit as stupid in this point as Mr. Locke. No body shall ever persuade me that I always think; and I don't find myself in the least more disposed than he to think, that a few weeks after I was conceived my soul was very learned, and acquainted with a thousand things that I forgot the moment I came into the world, and that I possessed to very little good purpose in the *uterus*, so many valuable secrets in philosophy, all of which abandoned me the instant they

they could have been of any advantage, and which I have never since been able to recover.

Locke, after demolishing the notion of innate ideas; after having renounced the vain opinion that the mind always thinks; having fully established this point, that the origin of all our ideas is from the senses*; having examined our simple and compound ideas; having accompanied the mind in all its operations; having shewn the imperfection of all the languages spoken by men, and what a gross abuse of terms we are every moment guilty of; Locke, I say, at length proceeds to consider the extent, or rather the nothingness, of human knowledge. This is the chapter in which he has the boldness to advance, though in a modest manner, "That we shall never be able to determine, whether a being, purely material, is capable of thought or no?" This sagacious proposition has passed with more than one divine as a scandalous assertion, that the soul is material and mortal. Some English devotees as usual gave the alarm. The superstitious are in society what poltroons are in an army; they infect the rest with their own panics. They cried out, that Mr. Locke wanted to turn all religion topsy-turvy: there was, however, not the smallest relation to religion in the affair, the question was purely philosophical, and altogether independent of faith and revelation. They had only to examine, without rancour, whether it were a contradiction to say, that

* This is expressly the doctrine of Aristotle. The soul has no knowledge but that which she acquires through the canal of the senses.

“matter is incapable of thought,” and, “God is able to endow matter with thought.” But it is too frequent with theologians to begin with pronouncing that God is offended, whenever we are not of their side of the question, or happen not to think as they do : the case is pretty much like that of the bad poets, who took it into their heads to imagine Boileau spoke high-treason, when he was only laughing at the silliness of their wretched compositions. Doctor Stillingfleet has acquired the character of a moderate divine, only because he has refrained from abuse in his controversy with Mr. Locke. He ventured to enter the lists with him, but was vanquished, because he reasoned too much like a doctor ; whilst Locke, like a true philosopher, fully acquainted with the strength and weakness of human understanding, fought with arms of whose temper he was perfectly well-assured.



ON THE SOUL.

LET us suppose a dozen philosophers in an island, where they never saw any thing besides the vegetable world. Such an island, and especially half a score or a dozen good philosophers, are, 'tis true, no easy matter to be met with ; but however we may very well imagine them, and therefore the hypothesis is allowable. They admire that life which circulates through the pores and fibres of plants, which seems sometimes to be annihilated, and at others to revive again :

again : and not being over and above well informed of the generation of plants, or in what manner they receive their growth and nourishment, they therefore call this the vegetative soul. What do you mean by the term *vegetative soul*? will some one ask. It is, answer they, a word we make use of to signify that unknown spring by which all these operations are performed. But, says some mechanic, do you not see all this is done in a natural way, by means of weights, levers, wheels, and pullies? No, say our philosophers, by no means. There is something more in this sort of vegetation than mere matter and motion; there is besides a secret power with which all plants are endowed, by which they admit the sap that is necessary for their nourishment; and this power, which cannot possibly be explained by any laws of mechanism, is a gift which God has bestowed on matter, and whereof neither you nor I can comprehend the return.

After a good deal of wrangling, at length our philosophers discover the animals. Ah! say they, after a long scrutiny, here are beings organized exactly as we are! They have certainly the gift of memory, and that frequently in a degree superior to ourselves. They have the same passions too; they have knowledge or consciousness; they communicate their wants; and perpetuate their species exactly in the same manner, and as well as the best metaphysician of us all could have done. They proceed to the dissection of one of these beings, in which they find a heart and a brain. What! say they, is it possible the author of these machines, who makes nothing in vain, should have given them all the

organs of sensation, merely to prevent their being in the least capable of sensation? The thought seems with absurdity. There is therefore most assuredly some attribute within them, which is properly what we call *Soul*, for want of a better word; something which is capable of perception, and which is provided with a certain stock of ideas. The question is, what this thinking principle is? Can it be something entirely different from matter? Is it a pure unmixed spirit? or shall we say, it is a being of a middle nature between that matter, whose properties we know not in any degree, and pure spirit, about which we are at least as much in the dark? or shall it be a property with which God endowed organized matter?

Then they fall to making experiments on insects, as on earth-worms, or the polypus; they cut them into several portions, and are astonished, after some little time, to see new heads grow out of each single part; the same animal reproduces itself, and draws from its very destruction the means of multiplying its species. Has it several souls, which wait to animate these parts so reproduced, when the head shall have been severed from the original trunk? They resemble the trees which shoot out branches, and which reproduce their like from their wounds: Can these trees have several souls too? This is by no means likely; it is therefore probable the souls of these beasts are of another species than that to which we gave the name of *vegetative soul* in plants; it must therefore be a superior faculty, with which God has designed to animate certain portions of matter; it is a new proof of his power, and affords new matter of adoration.

Some

Some person equally overbearing and false in his reasonings, happens to hear this discourse, and says, You are a set of impious wretches, whose bodies ought to be burned, for the good of your souls, for denying man's immortality. Our philosophers are struck with such unheard of language, and look at one another in amazement; one of them answers in a mild and placid tone of voice, Why in such haste to burn us? What reason can you have to think that we hold that cruel soul of yours to be mortal? Because you believe, replies the other, that God has given these brutes, who are organized as we are, the faculty of forming ideas and sentiment. Now know that the souls of brutes perish with them; therefore you must certainly hold that the souls of men perish also.

The philosopher answers, We are far from pretending to any certainty that what we call *soul* in the brutes perishes with them; we are well assured matter never perishes at all; and we are of opinion, it is possible God may have endowed animals with somewhat that may retain to all eternity, if God so please, the faculty of forming ideas. We are very far from asserting, that the thing is really and certainly so; it belongs not to man to be so confident of himself; but we dare not set bounds to the power of the Deity. We say it is extremely probable that the brutes, which are mere matter, may have received from him a certain portion of intelligence. We discover daily certain properties of matter; that is to say, so many gifts of the Deity, whereof we had here before no manner of conception. We at first defined matter to be an extended substance: afterwards we discovered

we ought to have added solidity; some time after we knew that this matter had a certain power, or force, which is called *inert force*, or *vis inertiae*; after which again we were quite astonished, to be reduced to the necessity of acknowledging that matter gravitates.

Upon our attempting to push our enquiries still farther, we were forced to own there were beings resembling matter in some points, but which are likewise without certain attributes with which matter is sometimes endowed. The elementary fire, for instance, acts on our senses as well as other bodies, yet it tends not to one common center as they do; on the contrary, it diverges from the center in straight lines towards all sides. It appears contradictory to all the laws of attraction and gravity, to which the other parts of matter are subject. Optics has mysteries altogether unaccountable, and for which it is impossible to assign any reason, but by hazarding the supposition that the rays of light penetrate each other. There is undoubtedly some property in light, which distinguishes it from all the other known parts of matter: it would seem that light is a kind of middle substance between bodies and the other kinds of beings, of which we are entirely ignorant. It is very probable, that those other species of matter are themselves a certain middle rank which leads to other creatures, and that there may be, in this manner, a chain of substances which rise to infinity.

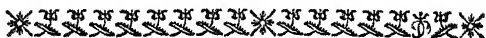
Usque adeo quod tangit idem est, tamen ultima distant.

This idea seems to us worthy of the greatness of God, if any ever was or can be so. Amongst these substances he might no doubt have chosen one, in order to place it in our body, and which is known by the name of the Human Soul; the sacred books which we have read, tell us this soul is immortal. Reason in this point agrees with revelation; for how is it possible any substance should perish? And if all nature is destroyed, yet being must ever exist. We cannot conceive such a thing as the creation of a substance; and it is equally impossible for us to form any idea of its annihilation. But we dare not venture to assert, that the Sovereign Lord of all things may not also have given sentiment and perception to the being called matter. You are perfectly sure the essence of your soul is thought, which is what we are by no means so positive of, for on examining a fœtus, we are at a loss to imagine its head can possibly be so well stored with ideas, and are quite dubious, that in the cases of a deep and perfect sleep, or in a complete lethargy, there is any such thing as meditation. Thus it appears to us, that thought may be, not the essence of the thinking substance, but a gift with which the Creator may have given those we call thinking beings. All this has created in us a doubt, that, were he so pleased, he might endow a single atom with this faculty, and preserve this atom to eternity, together with this gift, ordering both or either at his pleasure. There is less difficulty in conceiving how matter may be rendered capable of thinking, than to divine how any substance whatever should think. You have no ideas, only because it was the will of God

God you should enjoy this faculty; why then would you hinder him from bestowing this quality on other species of beings? Can you be daring enough to believe that your soul is exactly of the same substance with those beings which approach nearest to the Deity? There is abundance of reason to think them of a very superior order; and that consequently God hath designed to endue them with a faculty of thinking infinitely superior and more beautiful, in the same manner as he has granted a very moderate measure of ideas to brute animals, which are of an order inferior to you. I am utterly ignorant how I live, or how I bestow life, and you require me to comprehend how I come by ideas: the soul is as it were a clock which God has given us to regulate, but without telling us of what sort of substance the main spring of it is formed.

Is there any thing in all this from whence it can be inferred that our souls are mortal? Nay, further, we think as you do with respect to that immortality which the gospel announces; but at the same time we hold ourselves too ignorant to be able to affirm, that God has not power to bestow thought on whatever being he pleases. You set bounds to the power of the Creator, which is beyond all bounds, and we stretch it as far as his existence. You will forgive us if we hold him Almighty, as we forgive you the having restrained his power. You are certainly well-informed of what he is capable of doing, whilst we pretend to know nothing of the matter. Let us therefore live in peace like brothers who adore one common father; you as becomes people possessed of souls at once bold and well-

well-informed; and we like ignorant and cowardly spirits, as we certainly are. We have both but a span of existence to enjoy. Let us then enjoy it in peace, without falling together by the ears for quibbles and knotty questions, which will be better resolved on our entering that boundless ocean of eternity, which begins the moment our hour-glass is entirely spent.



ON TOLERATION;

And on the Maxim, That it is impossible
PHILOSOPHERS should be of Prejudice
to Human Society.

THIS brutal person unable to make a satisfactory reply, talked for a long time, and with great heat. Our poor philosophers in the mean while applied themselves to reading history, and after much study declared to the barbarian, That he was unworthy to possess an immortal soul.

Friend, we read that throughout all antiquity matters went altogether as well as in our times; that there were even greater virtues, and that philosophers were never persecuted for matters of mere opinion; why then would you punish us for opinions we never held, and which have no existence but in your own disordered brain? We read that all antiquity believed matter to be eternal. Even those who discovered it to have been created, let others enjoy their opinions in peace. Pythagoras

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ras had been a cock, and his parents hogs: nobody had any thing to say against it, whilst his sect was loved and revered by all mankind, except by cooks, and those who had any beans to dispose of.

The Stoics acknowledged God much such another Deity as has been so rashly abandoned by the Spinofists*; yet the Stoics was the sect of all others that abounded most in heroic virtues, and enjoyed the greatest degree of credit amongst mankind.

The Epicureans made their gods resemble our canoas, who maintain their *divine right* by a luxurious indolence, sipping their nectar and ambrosia in perfect peace, and giving themselves no sort of trouble how the world went. ~~The Epicureans boldly taught the materiality and mortality of the soul. They were not the less regarded on that account. They were admitted into all offices of trust or honour, and yet their jumble of atoms did not occasion the least disorder in the world.~~

The Platonists, like the Gymnosophists, did not do us the honour to think such a being as God ever deigned to create us with his own hands. He had, according to them, left this servile office to subalterns called Genii, who committed a thousand disorders and blunders in the exercise of their function. The god of the

* The famous Spinoza, the son of a Portuguese Jew, was born at Amsterdam in the last century, and has been branded as an atheist for maintaining that the whole universe, and all it contains, belongs essentially to the nature of God, considered as one only substance, of which thought and infinite extent are no more than the properties.

Platonists was an excellent workman, who employed but bungling apprentices in his work, here below. Yet men were not wanting in their respect for the school of Plato.

In a word, both with Greeks and Romans, so many sects, so many different moods or ways there were of thinking about the Deity, the soul, the past, and the future; yet none of all these sects were ever persecuted. They were all mistaken, a circumstance we are exceedingly sorry for; yet were they all peaceable and quiet, which confounds and amazes, because it condemns us, by shewing, that most of the reasoners of this day are monsters, whilst those of antiquity were no other than human beings. They sung publicly on the stage at Rome, *Post mortem nihil est*; *ipsorum nihil*. "There is nothing after death; and death itself is but nothing." These sentiments rendered them neither better nor worse; and the world was as easily and as well governed as before; whilst a Titus, a Trajan, and a Marcus Aurelius swayed the world, like so many beneficent deities.

If we pass from the Greeks and Romans to the barbarous nations, let us stop a while amongst the Jews. Superstitious, cruel, and ignorant as this wretched people certainly were, yet they honoured the Pharisees, who admitted the fatality of destiny, and the meretriciousness. They also respected the Sadducees, who absolutely denied the immortality of the soul, together with the existence of any manner of spirits, founding their dogmas on the law of Moses, which never makes the least mention either of rewards or punishments after this life. The Essenians, who held the opi-

opinion of fatality too, and who never offered up any kind of victim in the temple, were still more revered than the Pharisees and the Sadducees; yet did none of their opinions occasion the least disturbance in government. There was reason, however, sufficient to promote cutting of one another's throats, burning and exterminating each other by turns, had they had the least inclination to divert themselves that way. O wretched mortals! profit by these examples. Think for yourselves, and let others enjoy the privilege to do so too. It is the sole consolation of weak minds in this short and transitory life of ours. What! shall you receive with politeness a Turk, who believes Mahomet made a voyage to the moon? You would be very careful how you would have obliged the bashaw Bonneval, yet would you cut your brother Christian to pieces, because he believes God is able to have bestowed intelligence and thought on every creature.

In this manner spoke one of those philosophers: a second added; "Believe me, we ought never to admit such a thought as that any philosophical notion is capable of hurting the established religion of a country. Although our mysteries contradict our demonstration; yet they are, not a whit the less revered by our christian philosophers, who know that the objects of faith and of reason are of a very opposite nature. Never will philosophers be the founders of any religious sect: Why? Because they are without the leaven of enthusiasm. Divide the human race into twenty parts; nineteen are composed of such persons, who maintain themselves by the labour of their hands, and who will hardly know that such men as Locke and Newton
ever

ever existed. In the remaining twentieth part, how few shall we find who read? And, even of those who do twenty are readers of romances, for one that studies philosophy. The number of those who study is infinitely small, and those few will never think of disturbing the peace of mankind.

Who are they who have brought the flame of discord into their country? Was it Pomponacius, Montagne, le Vayer, Descartes, Gassendi, Bayle, Spinoza, Hobbes, lord Shaftsbury, the count de Boulainvilliers, the consul Maillet, Toland, Collins, Fludd, Woolston, Becker, the author who disguises himself under the feigned name of James Massey, the writer of the Turkish Spy, of the Jewish Letters, of the Persian letters, of the *Pensée Philosophiques*, &c.? By no means: they were generally theologians, who, being at ^{first} actuated with the ambition of ~~becoming~~ heads of sects, had soon afterwards adopted that of being chiefs of a party. What do I say? All the books of modern philosophy put together could not have made such a disturbance as the dispute of the Cordeliers formerly did, to determine the orthodox form of their sleeves and cowls.

ON

O. N.

DESCARTES and NEWTON.

A Frenchman, on his arrival in London, finds a total change in philosophy, as in every thing else. He has just left the world, which abhors a *vacuum*, for one full of emptiness. At Paris we see a world composed of vortices of a subtle matter; at London there is no such thing in nature. With you, it is the pressure of the moon that occasions the flux and reflux of the sea: amongst the English, it is the sea which gravitates towards the moon; so that, when you think the moon ought to give us high water, these ~~philosophers~~ hold we ought to have quite the contrary, or low ~~water~~. Unhappily for us, there is no coming at the truth ~~† of this, except~~ one had been able to examine the moon and the tides at the first moment of their creation. You will farther remark, that the sun, which in France passed for a mere cypher in this affair, clubs in this country for a fourth part of the reckoning. Amongst your Cartesians, every thing

† It is not a very easy matter to understand our author's meaning in this paragraph. The greatest difficulty about the tides was that of accounting for their rising equally high, or nearly so, at the same time, on both sides of the earth, which could not possibly be affected equally by the attraction of the moon. But this difficulty is removed by the ingenuity of Mr. Ferguson, who proves, by experiment, that the centrifugal force of the side of the earth furthest from the moon, overbalances her attraction nearly as much as her attraction on the side next her overbalances the centrifugal force of that side,

is performed by means of a certain impulse, that is past all understanding: according to Mr. Newton, it is done by means of attraction, the cause of which is altogether as great a secret. At Paris, you figure to yourselves the earth much like a melon; at London, it is flattened on both sides *. Light, with a Cartesian, exists in the air; according to a Newtonian, it travels to us from the sun, and is about six minutes and an half in its passage. Your chymistry performs all its operations by means of acids and alkalies, and a certain portion of subtle manner; in the English chymistry it is attraction which predominates.

Even the essence of things has undergone a total change. You agree neither about the definition of the soul, nor that of matter. Descartes asserts the soul to be the ^{same} individual substance with thought; whilst Mr. Locke shows the contrary, with all the ease and perspicuity imaginable. Descartes maintains, that matter is nothing but extension; Newton must needs add solidity. Here are terrible contradictions truly!

Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites.

This famous Newton, the destroyer of the Cartesian system, died in the month of March of the year 1727. He lived honoured by his countrymen, and has been venerated as a king who had been a benefactor to his people. He has been read with extreme avidity; and the eulogium of Newton, pronounced by Fontenelle in

* That the earth is an oblate spheroid is now well known, and universally acknowledged.

the Academy of Sciences, has been translated into English. They expected also his judgment, as a solemn declaration of the superiority of the English philosophy. But on finding he not only deceived them in giving an account of this philosophy, but even that he compared Descartes with Newton, the whole Royal Society of London rose up in arms; and, far from acquiescing in his determination, they were very severe in their criticism on that piece. There were even some (and these not the greatest philosophers among them) who were shocked at the comparison, for no other reason than that Descartes was a Frenchman.

It must be acknowledged these two philosophers pursued a very different conduct, as well in regard to their fortune and way of life as their philosophy. ~~Descartes was born with a strong and lively imagination, which rendered him extremely singular in his private conduct of life,~~ as well as in his method of reasoning. His fancy could not be restrained even in his philosophical works, in which we are constantly meeting with ingenious and lively turns of thought. Nature had almost made him a poet; and he actually composed for the queen of Sweden an entertainment in verse, which, for the honour of his memory, has not been printed. He followed for some time the profession of arms; and then, all of a sudden turning philosopher, at length he thought fit, in spite of the gravity of his character, to fall in love. He had by his mistress a daughter called Francine, who died young, to the great regret of the father. Thus he experienced all the different vicissitudes incident to human life.

He was for a great while of opinion, that, in order to philosophize in full liberty, it was necessary to fly the society of men, and especially to quit his country. He was certainly in the right, his contemporaries being utterly incapable of giving him any assistance, and more likely to do him prejudice than be of any kind of advantage to him. He quitted France, therefore, in quest of truth, which was then persecuted on all sides by the wretched philosophy of the schools; but he found reason to the full as little encouraged in the universities of Holland, whither he retired: for whilst they condemned in France only such propositions in his philosophy as were true, he was equally persecuted by the philosophers in Holland, who did not understand it more than the former; and who, as they beheld his credit from a nearer point of view, that very reason hated his person more: he was therefore obliged to leave Utrecht. He underwent the accusation of atheism, the last resource of calumny; and the man who had employed all the efforts of his natural sagacity to find out new proofs of the being of a God, was accused of denying his existence. So many persecutions necessarily supposed an extraordinary share of merit and reputation: and he was well known to enjoy a great share of both. Reason began to make some small progress in the world, and to penetrate the fogs and darkness of the schools, as well as to thin the mazes of popular prejudices. His name, at length, made such a noise, that it was proposed to engage him to return into France, by rewarding him according to his merit. He was offered a pension of a thousand crowns. In hopes of this, he actually

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returned, payed the charge of the patent, was disappointed of his pension, and went back to philosophize in the solitudes of North Holland; whilst the great Galileo, at the age of fourscore, groaned away his days in the dungeons of the Inquisition, because he had demonstrated, by irrefragable proofs, the motion of the earth. At length our philosopher ended his life suddenly at Stockholm, his premature death being occasioned by a bad regimen, in the presence of some of the learned, who were his enemies, and in the management of certain physicians, who bore him a mortal antipathy.

The career of Sir Isaac Newton was intirely different from his : his life, which lasted till near fourscore, was attended throughout with a happy tranquillity, honoured and esteemed by his country. It was his great good fortune not only to be born in a free country, but in an age too in which all the fooleries of the schools had been banished; and reason alone was cultivated : thus mankind were more disposed to become his scholars than his enemies.

There is one very singular difference between his fortune and that of Descartes ; which is this, that, in the course of so long a life, he was intirely free from the tyranny of passion, as he was from any kind of failing. He never had the least commerce with any woman; a circumstance of which I have been assured by the physician and surgeon in whose hands he died : in this we ought certainly to admire Newton, yet without blaming a contrary conduct in Descartes.

The public opinion in England, with regard to the two philosophers we are now speaking of,

is, that the former was properly no more than a dreamer, whilst the other was a true sage. There are very few in London who read Descartes, whose works are, in effect, grown perfectly useless: there are also few who read Newton; but this is owing to its requiring much learning to be able to comprehend him. Yet every body talks of them; and whilst the Frenchman stands excluded from any kind of respect or admiration, no praises are thought too high for the merit of the English philosopher. Some folks imagine, that the exploding that odd notion of the horrors of a *vacuum*, the discovery of the weight and spring of the atmosphere, and the invention of telescopes, are all of them owing to the sagacity of Newton: in short, he is in this country a second fabulous Hercules, to whose single valour the ignorant have ascribed the exploits of all the others.

In a critique published in London on Fontenelle's discourse, they have the boldness to assert, that Descartes is no geometrician. Those who talk in this manner may be justly accused of turning against their benefactor. Descartes has made full as great a progress, from the point in which he found geometry to that to which he has carried it, as Newton has done after him. He is the first who taught the manner of finding the algebraic equation of curves. His geometry, which has, thanks to him for it, become so common since his time, was then thought so very deep, that no professor would take upon him to explain it; and there was no one in France, but Fermat, or in all the United Provinces, besides Schouten, who understood it. He carried this geometrical and inventive genius with him

into the study of dioptrics, which became an art intirely new in his hands; and if he has made considerable mistakes, it is because they who discover new countries cannot be supposed, at the first, to be alike thoroughly acquainted with every part of it. They who have followed him in it, owe him at least the obligation of the discovery. At the same time, I am far from asserting that there are not abundance of mistakes in Descartes.

Geometry was a guide, which he had formed in some measure himself, and which would have conducted him with great certainty in his researches in physics: but at last, abandoning this guide, he was bewildered in the mazes of system, which he adopted. From this time forwards his philosophy became no other than an ingenious romance, and, at best, probable only in the eyes of those ignorant philosophers who were his contemporaries. He was mistaken with respect to the soul, the laws of motion, and the doctrine of light and colour. He admitted innate ideas, invented new elements, created a world, and made man after his own fancy; so that it was said, with great justice, that man, as made by Descartes, was a perfect original, wholly different from that formed by God Almighty. He carried his metaphysical mistakes so very far as to pretend that two and two make four, because it was the will and pleasure of God it should be so; but I think I need hardly fear the imputation of partiality in saying, that his very wanderings have somewhat amiable. It is true, he was deceived; but it was, at least, according to method, and his errors were the fruit of consequences very justly drawn from their premises.

If he invented new chimeras in physics, we must at the same time acknowledge that he destroyed the antient ones, and that he taught his contemporaries to reason, and even to fight him at his own weapons. In short, if he has not always paid in sterling coin, we owe him the obligation of having put down the bad.

Descartes bestowed one eye on the blind, which enabled them to discover the blunders of antiquity as well as his own: the road he laid open is, since his time, become infinitely frequented. Rohault's little book was formerly deemed a complete system of physics: at this day, all the collections of the several academies of Europe do not form what may be called a good introduction to this science. By dint of founding this abyss, we have at last discovered it to be bottomless, and really infinite.



ON NEWTON.

NEWTON was first intended for the church. He set out with the study of divinity, and retained a tincture of it to his dying day. He very seriously adopted the cause of Arius against Athanasius, and even went farther than he, as all the Socinians actually do. There are at present a great many of the learned of this opinion; I shall not venture to say of this communion, as they make no distinct body. They are, moreover, divided amongst themselves; and several of them have brought their system to pure Deism, to which they have adapted the morality

of Jesus Christ. Newton was by no means of the number of these latter, and differed from the English church only on the point of Consubstantiation, being orthodox in all the rest.

A proof of the sincerity of his faith, is his writing a commentary on the Revelations. Here he finds it clear, to a demonstration, that the pope is Antichrist, and explains the rest of this book exactly as the other commentators have done. Possibly he meant, by this commentary, to console the rest of the human race for the great superiority he had over them. There are several who, having read the little treatise of Metaphysics which Newton has placed at the end of his *Principia Mathematica*, have met with somewhat full as obscure as the Apocalypse. Metaphysicians and theologians are much like those kind of gladiators who were obliged to fight hood-winked. But when Newton worked with the bandage removed from his eyes on his mathematics, his sight pierced to the utmost limits of nature.

He invented the calculation of infinites; he has discovered and demonstrated a new principle, which sets the universe in motion. Light was wholly unknown before his time. There were only confused and false ideas of it, till Newton pronounced the most admirable *fiat*, and said, *Let light be known, and light was known.*

He was the inventor of reflecting telescopes; and the first that ever was seen was the work of his own hands. He likewise demonstrated the reason why the power and focus of common telescopes are not to be augmented. It was owing to this new telescope that a German took Newton for a mechanic, that is, for a spectacle-

spectacle-maker. *Artifex quidam nomine Newton*, says he, in some paultry book. But posterity has since sufficiently revenged the affront. He had still greater injustice done him in France, where he was held as a blundering trier of experiments; and because Mariotte made use of false prisms, the discoveries of Newton were exploded.

He was admired by his countrymen as soon as he had published and proved the truth of his theory by his new-invented instruments; but it was forty years before he was properly known in France. But to make amends, we had the fluted and ramose matter of Descartes, the little soft vortices of the reverend father Mallebranche, and the system of M. Privat de Moliere, which is yet much inferior in value to the works of Poquelin de Moliere.

There is no one of those who were in the least acquainted with cardinal Polignac, who has not heard him say a number of times, that Newton was certainly a Peripatetic, and that his coloured rays and his attraction bordered very near on atheism. Cardinal de Polignac joined to all those advantages he had received from nature, a very great share of eloquence: he composed verses in Latin with a surprising and a happy facility; but he knew no other philosophy than that of Descartes, all of whose arguments he had retained, just like so many dates. He was not yet become a geometrician, and nature had not formed him for a philosopher. He was an excellent judge of Catiline's Conspiracy, or of an *Aeneis*; but by no means fit to decide on the merits of a Locke or a Newton.

When one considers that Newton, Locke, Clarke, and Leibnitz, would have been persecuted

cuted in France, imprisoned at Rome, and burned at Lisbon, what are we to think of human reason? One would swear it was a native of England in the present age at least. In the time of queen Mary there was a violent persecution, on account of the proper way of pronouncing Greek, in which the persecutors were, as usual, in the wrong. They who put Galileo into the inquisition were still more so; and every inquisitor ought to blush, from the bottom of his soul, at the sight of the sphere of Copernicus. Notwithstanding, had Newton been born in Portugal, and a Dominican friar happened to have discovered a heresy in his inverted ratio of the squares of the distances of the planets, Sir Isaac Newton had certainly walked in procession in his *sanbenito* * at some *Auto de Fe*.

It has been often asked, how it comes to pass that they who, by their function, ought to be learned and humane, have so commonly proved, to the last degree, ignorant and implacable? Their ignorance was wholly owing to their having studied too closely, and too much; and their unrelenting cruelty was occasioned by the consciousness, that their wretched learning was the just object of the contempt of true philosophers. Notwithstanding, those very inquisitors, who had the effrontery to condemn the system of Copernicus, not only as heretical but as absurd, had not the smallest grounds of apprehension from that system. Although the

* This is a corruption of *sacco benito*, the sackcloth worn by penitents in the primitive church. It is now the name given to the scapulary, or broad piece of cloth marked with the sign of the Cross, put upon convicted heretics when they are brought from the Inquisition to the stake.

earth performed her annual revolution round the sun, together with the rest of the planets; the church would, for all that, have enjoyed both her revenues and her dignities. Even the ecclesiastical dogmas are in perfect safety, when impugned only by philosophers: all the academies under the cope of heaven are not able, with their utmost efforts, to make the smallest revolution in the common creed of a nation, let its tenets be ever so absurd. From what source, then, arises this pious rage, which has so often inflamed the Anitus's against the Socrates's? It is because the Anitus's are conscious, that they merit and enjoy the sovereign contempt of the Socrates's.

I had a notion in my younger days, that Newton had made his fortune by his extraordinary merit. I made no doubt that both court and city at London had created him, with one common consent, chief manager and supreme director of the coin of the kingdom. I was herein greatly mistaken; Sir Isaac Newton had a pretty niece, called Mrs. Conduite, who had the good fortune to please the lord high treasurer † Halifax. Had it not been for this handsome niece, his doctrine of gravitation and *infinitesimalis*, had been wholly useless to him, and he might have starved with all his talents.

* The earl of Halifax was chancellor of the Exchequer.

ON CHRONOLOGY,

AS REFORMED BY NEWTON,

Who makes the World younger than the
common æra by five hundred years.

I Come now to take notice of another work, more within the reach of the human mind; but which, notwithstanding, discovers that creative genius that Mr. Newton displayed in all his productions. This is his system of Chronology, which is wholly new; for he appears to have been fated, in whatever subject he engaged, to make a total revolution, in the common received opinions of the rest of mankind. Accustomed as he was to bring order out of confusion, and to fetch beauty and regularity from the chaos of opinions he examined, he engaged in this work with a view to throw light upon those remote parts of history, where fables and facts lay jumbled together, and to fix and ascertain a very doubtful chronology. One thing is past all manner of doubt, that there is scarce a family, city, or nation, which does not endeavour, by all possible means, to carry their original as far back into antiquity as may be. Besides, the first historians are generally the least exact in fixing the dates of transactions. Books were then a thousand times scarcer than at present, and consequently were less obnoxious to criticism; they imposed on mankind with greater impunity: and as it is unquestionable that facts have frequently

quently been forged, it is more than probable that dates have been so likewise. Upon the whole, it appeared to Mr. Newton, that the world was younger by five hundred years than the accounts of the chronologers make it. He grounds his conjecture on the common course of nature, and on astronomical observations.

What is here meant by the common course of nature, is the duration of each generation of men. The Egyptians were the first that made use of this vague way of computation, in their accounts of the first periods in their history. They reckoned three hundred and forty-one generations from Menes to Sethon; and having no fixed dates, they reckoned three generations made up the space of one hundred years. Thus, from the reign of Menes to that of Sethon, they computed eleven thousand three hundred and forty years. The Greeks, before the institution of the Olympiads, followed the same method of computation with the Egyptians, and somewhat augmented the duration of each generation, by valuing each at about forty years. Now both Greeks and Egyptians were most egregiously out by this method of calculation. It is true, according to the common course of nature, three generations make pretty nearly from one hundred to six-score years; but it is far from following from hence that three reigns make up this number of years. Thus a man, who should set about writing a history, without the assistance of fixed epochas, and having learned that in such a nation there had been a series of nine kings, would err considerably in allowing three hundred years for those nine kings. Each generation is about thirty years, and each reign

about twenty, one with another. If we take the thirty kings who have reigned in England from William the Conqueror to George I. their reigns will be found to amount to six hundred and forty-eight years, which, divided by thirty, the number of those kings, will allow about one and twenty years and a half for each reign. This is properly the common course of nature. The ancients were therefore deceived in making the duration of reigns and that of generations to be generally equal; they have consequently over reckoned themselves, so that there is a necessity to retrench this computation a little.

Astronomical observations seem to yield our philosopher still greater aid. He fights to advantage on his ground. The earth, you know, besides its annual motion which whirls it round the sun from West to East in the space of a year, has likewise a peculiar revolution altogether unknown till these latter ages. Its poles have a very slow retrograde motion from East to West, so that its position is every day changed with regard to the heavens. This yearly change of position, though insensible, becomes considerable in time, so as in seventy-two years to amount to one degree; that is to say, the three hundredth and sixtieth part of the heavens. Hence, in the space of seventy-two years the vernal equinoctial colure, which, in the beginning of that period, passed through a certain fixed star, will at the end of it pass through a different fixed star. From this it follows that the sun, instead of being in that part of the heavens where the ram was placed in the time of Hipparchus, is found to correspond to that part of the heavens where the constellation of the Bull

is situated, and the Twins have succeeded to the place in which the Bull then was. All the signs have changed places; notwithstanding we have retained the way of speaking assumed by the ancients. We say, for instance, that the sun in the spring is in the Ram, by the same complaisance by which we say the sun moves.

Hipparchus was the first of the Greeks who perceived that some change happened in the constellations with regard to the equinoxes, or rather learned this circumstance of the Egyptians. Their philosophers attributed this motion to the stars, for at that time of day they were very far from imagining any such revolution in the earth. It was believed by them wholly immoveable: they therefore created a heaven, in which they stuck all the fixed stars, and this heaven they gave a particular motion, which caused it to advance towards the East, whilst all the stars seemed to have a daily revolution from East to West. To this error they added a second, which was much more consequential. They believed that this imaginary heaven of the fixed stars advanced one degree towards the East in a hundred years. Thus they were mistaken in their astronomical calculations, as well as in their system of the universe: for instance, an astronomer would then have said that the vernal equinox was in the time of such an observer, in such a sign, and in such a fixed star. He has made a progress of two degrees from that observator to our time: now, two degrees are equal to two hundred years; therefore it follows, that this observator must have lived two hundred years before us. It is certain that an astronomer who should have reasoned in this manner, would

have been wrong by about fifty years. This is then the reason why the ancient astronomers, thus doubly deceived, made their great year of the world (that is to say, of the revolution of the whole heavens) to consist of about thirty-six thousand years. But the moderns know, that this imaginary revolution of the starry heavens, is no more than the revolution of the poles of the earth, which it performs in twenty-five thousand nine hundred years. It will be proper to observe by-the-by, that Mr. Newton, in determining the figure of the earth, has very happily explained this revolution.

All this being laid down, it remains, in order to ascertain chronology to see at what fixed star the equinoxial colure now cuts the ecliptic in the spring, and to know whether some of the ancients may not have informed us in what point the ecliptic was cut in his time by the same equinoxial colure. Clemens Alexandrinus relates, that Chiron, who was in the expedition of the Argonauts, observed the constellations in the time of that famous expedition, and fixed the vernal equinox in the middle of the Bear, the autumnal equinox in the middle of the Balance, our summer solstice in the middle of Cancer, and the winter solstice in the middle of Capricorn.

A long time after the expedition of the Argonauts, and a year before the Peloponnesian war, Meton observed that the point of the summer solstice passed through the sixth degree of Cancer.

Now each sign in the Zodiac consists of thirty degrees. In the time of Chiron the solstice was in the middle of the sign; that is to say, in its fifteenth degree; a year before the Peloponnesian war, it was in the eighth degree; it had therefore

fore been retrograde seven degrees; a degree then being then equal to seventy-two years, it follows that from the beginning of the Peloponnesian war to the expedition of the Argonauts, there are but seven times seventy-two, which makes five hundred and four years, and not seven hundred years as the Greeks say.

Thus, by comparing the state of the heavens at this day to the state in which it then was, we see the expedition of the Argonauts ought to have been placed nine hundred and nine years before Jesus Christ, and not about fourteen hundred years, and that consequently the world is younger by about five hundred years than was commonly imagined.

By this means all the epochs are brought nearer to us, and every transaction is made to happen later than they are said to have been. This system seems to me to be true, tho' I dare not take upon me to say whether it will be adopted by the multitude, or whether men will hence be brought to reform the vulgar chronology. The learned may possibly be of opinion, that it would be doing too much honour to one and the same person to allow him to have perfected physics, geometry, and history; this would be a kind of universal monarchy in literature, which self-love will not easily put up with. Thus, whilst the partizans of vortices and fluted matter attacked gravitation, which had been already demonstrated, the reverend father Souciet and Mr. Freret were writing against Newton's chronology before it was printed.

N. B. The chapters on light and attraction have been retrenched here, but will be found in that part of this edition which treats on philosophy, which is their proper place.

ON THE ENGLISH TRAGEDY.

THE English had a regular theatre, as well as the Spaniards, whilst the French had as yet but booths. Shakespear, whom the English consider as another Sophocles, flourished about the time of Lopez de Vega: he was properly the creator of their theatre. His genius was at once strong and abundant, natural and sublime, but without the smallest spark of taste, and void of the remotest idea of the rules. I will venture to tell you a bold, but yet undoubted truth; which is, that the merit of this author has been the ruin of the English stage: there are in him scenes so perfectly beautiful, and passages so very full of the great and terrible, spread up and down those monstrous farces of his which they have christened tragedies, that his pieces have always been played with prodigious success. Time, which alone is capable of establishing the reputation of authors, serves at length to consecrate their very defects. The greatest part of those extravagant passages, and of that bombast which abounds in his works, have, in the course of an hundred and fifty years, acquired a kind of title to pass for the true sublime. Their modern authors are, generally speaking, no more than copiers of him, though what succeeded in *Shakespear* is hissed in them; and you know the veneration they entertain for this author increases in proportion to their contempt of the moderns. They never
once

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once reflect that it is absurd to pretend to imitate him ; and it is wholly owing to the ill success of those copiers, and not to their want of capacity, that he is thought inimitable.

You know that in the tragedy of the Moor of Venice, a very interesting piece, a husband smothers his wife on the stage, and the poor woman dies asserting her innocence. You are not ignorant that in Hamlet a couple of gravediggers dig a grave upon the stage, singing and drinking at their work, and passing the low jokes common to these sort of people, on the skulls they throw up : but what will most astonish you, is, that these fooleries have been imitated.

In the reign of Charles the Second, which was the reign of politeness, and the æra of the fine arts, Otway, in his *Venice Preserved*, introduced the senator *Antonio*, and his courtesan *Aquilina*, in the midst of the horrors of *Bedemar's* conspiracy ; the old senator plays all the monkey-tricks, on the stage, of an old impotent crazy lecher. He mimicks by turns a bull, and a dog, and he bites his mistress's legs, who alternately whips and kicks him. These buffooneries, however, calculated to please the rabble, have since been omitted in the representation of this piece ; but in *Julius Cæsar*, the idle jests of Roman shoemakers and cobblers are still introduced on the stage with *Cassius* and *Brutus*.

You will, no doubt, lament that those who have hitherto spoken to you of the English stage, and particularly of the celebrated Shakespeare, have only pointed out his errors, and that no one has translated those striking passages

in this great man which atone for all his faults. To this I shall answer, that it is very easy to recount in prose the absurdities of a poet, but very difficult to translate his fine verses; those who set themselves up for critics of celebrated writers generally compile volumes; but I had rather read two pages which discover only their beauties; for I shall always concur with all men of taste in this opinion, that there is more to be learnt in a dozen verses of Homer or Virgil, than in all the criticisms on those great men.

I have ventured to translate some passages of the best English poets, and I begin with one of Shakespear's.—Be indulgent to the copy, in honor to the original; and always remember, that when you see a translation, you perceive only a faint copy of a fine picture. I have selected the soliloquy in the tragedy of Hamlet, which is universally known, and begins with this line:

To be, or not to be! that is the question!

It is Hamlet prince of Denmark who speaks.

*Demeure, il faut choisir, & passer à l'instant
De la vie à la mort, ou de l'être au néant.
Dieux justes, s'il en est, éclairez mon courage.
Faut-il vieillir courbé sous la main qui m'outrage,
Supporter, ou finir mon malheur & mon sort?
Qui suis-je? Que m'arrête? Et qu'est-ce que la
mort?
C'est la fin de nos maux, c'est mon unique azile;
Après de longs transports, c'est un sommeil tranquille.
On s'endort, & tout meurt; mais un affreux réveil
Doit succéder peut-être aux douceurs du sommeil.
On nous menace, on dit, que cette courte vie
De tourmens éternels est aussi-tôt suivie.*

O mort!

O mort ! moment fatal ! affreuse éternité !
 Tout cœur à ton seul nom se glace épouvanté.
 Eh ! qui pourrait sans toi supporter cette vie ?
 De nos Prêtres menteurs bénir l'hypocrisie ?
 D'une indigne maîtresse encenser les erreurs ?
 Ramper sous un Ministre, adorer ses hauteurs ?
 Et montrer les langueurs de son ame abattue,
 A des amis ingrats, qui détournent la vue ?
 La mort serait trop douce en ces extrémités.
 Mais le scrupule parle, & nous crie, Arrêtez.
 Il défend à nos mains cet heureux homicide,
 Et d'un Héros guerrier, fait un Chrétien timide.

Do not imagine that I have given you the English word for word ;—woe be to those literal translators, who, by rendering every single word, enervate the sense ! It is in this case that we may truly say, “ The letter kills, and the spirit revives.” *

I shall now give you a passage from the famous Dryden, an English poet who flourished in the reign of Charles the Second ; an author more fertile than judicious, who would have preserved an unblemished reputation, if he had wrote only the tenth part of his works.

The passage begins thus :

*When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat ;
 Yet, fool'd by hope, men favour the deceit, &c.*

*De desseins en regrets, & d'erreurs en desirs,
 Les mortels infensés promènent leur folie,*

* Were this paraphrase translated literally, an English reader would scarcely recognize in it any traces of the original. It must be owned, however, that M. de Voltaire has avoided the confusion of metaphors which is to be found in Shakespear.

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Dans des malheurs présens, dans l'espoir des plaisirs.

*Nous ne vivons jamais, nous attendons la vie.
Demain, demain, dit-on, va combler tous nos vœux.
Demain vient, & nous laisse encor plus malheureux.
Quelle est l'erreur, hélas ! du soin qui nous dévore ?
Nul de nous ne voudrait recommencer son cours.
De nos premiers momens nous maudissons l'aurore,
Et de la nuit qui vient, nous attendons encore
Ce qu'ont en vain promis les plus beaux de nos
jours, &c.*

It is in these detached sentences that the English tragedies have hitherto excelled : Their pieces, almost always barbarous, void of decency, order, and probability, have yet, amidst this night of darkness, their splendid days of light : their stile is too stiff, too unnatural, too much copied from the Hebrew writers, and too full of Asiatic bombast ; but then the mind is transported to an amazing height, soaring on the pinnions of the metaphorical stile which adorns the English language.

It sometimes seems as if nature were not the same in England as elsewhere. This same Dryden, in his farce of Don Sebastian king of Portugal, which he calls a tragedy, makes an officer give the following reply to that monarch :

LE ROI SEBASTIEN.

Ne me connais-tu pas, traître, insolent !

DORAX.

Qui moi ?

*Je te connais fort bien, mais non pas pour mon
Roi.*

Tu

*Tu n'es plus dans Lisbonne, où ta Cour méprisable
Nourrissait de ton cœur l'orgueil insupportable.
Un tas d'illustres fots & de fripons titrés,
Et de gueux du bel air & d'esclaves dorés,
Chatouillait ton oreille & fascinait ta vue ;
On t'entourait en cercle ainsi qu'une statue.
Quand tu disais un mot, chacun le cou tendu,
S'empressait d'applaudir sans t'avoir entendu ;
Et ce troupeau servile admirait en silence
Ta royale sottise & ta noble arrogance :
Mais te voilà réduit à ta juste valeur. . . .*

SEBASTIAN.

—Be warn'd, and know me for thy king.

DORAX.

Too well I know thee, but for king no more :
This is not Lisbon, nor the circle this,
Where, like a statue, thou hast stood besieg'd
By sycophants and fools, the growth of courts.
Where thy gull'd eyes, in all the gaudy round,
Met nothing but a lie in every face ;
And the gross flattery of a gaping crowd,
Envious who first should catch, and first applaud
The stuff, or royal nonsense.

This speech is in the English taste ; and the whole piece is full of buffoonery : How shall we reconcile, say our critics, so much good sense with such absurdity, so much meanness with such sublimity of expression ? Nothing so easy ; let it be remembered, that they were wrote by men. The Spanish stage has all the faults of the English, without its beauties ; and, in reality, what were the Greek authors ? what Euripides, who, in the same piece, paints so affecting, so noble a picture of Alcestes sacrific-

cing

cing herself to the manes of her husband, and puts into the mouth of Admetes and his father such gross puerilities, that have puzzled even his commentators? A reader must have great patience and fortitude not to find Homer's sleepy fit sometimes a little tedious, and his dreams insipid?—It will require many ages to purify good taste.—Virgil among the Romans, Racine among the French, were the first who always preserved a purity of taste in capital pieces.

Addison was the first Englishman who wrote a rational tragedy; but I should pity him if he had only made it barely rational. His tragedy of Cato is wrote from the beginning to the end with that masterly and energetic elegance of which Corneille first gave us such fine examples in his unequal stile. It appears to me that this piece is adapted to an audience somewhat philosophic, and very republican. I much doubt if our young ladies and petits-mâtres would have relished Cato in his night-gown, reading Plato's dialogues, and making reflections on the immortality of the soul: but those who soar above the customs, the prejudices, and the foibles of their own nation, who are of every age, and of every country, those who prefer philosophic grandeur to soft tales of love, will be pleased to find here a copy, though an imperfect one, of that sublime scene.—It seems as if Addison, in this fine soliloquy, aimed at rivaling Shakespear, I will translate the one as I did the other; I mean, with that freedom without which we are too apt to wander from the original, by endeavouring at too close an imitation. The ground-work is faithfully portrayed, I shall only add a few shades. Not being

ing able to equal him, I must attempt to improve upon him.

*Oui, Platon, tu dis vrai, notre ame est immortelle.
C'est un Dieu qui lui parle, un Dieu qui vit en elle.*

*Eh! d'où viendrait sans lui ce grand pressentiment,
Ce dégoût des faux biens, cette horreur du néant?
Vers des siècles sans fin je sens que tu m'entraînes.
Du monde & de mes sens je vai briser les chaines,
Et m'ouvrir loin d'un corps dans la fange arrêté
Les portes de la vie & de l'éternité.*

*L'éternité! quel mot consolant & terrible!
O lumière! O nuage! O profondeur horrible!
Que suis-je? où suis-je? où vai-je! & d'où
suis-je tiré?*

Dans quels climats nouveaux, dans quel monde ignoré,

*Le moment du trépas va-t-il plonger mon être?
Où sera cet esprit qui ne peut se connaître?
Que me préparez-vous, âmes ténébreux?
Allons, s'il est un Dieu, Caton doit être heureux.
Il est un sans doute, & je suis son ouvrage.
Lui-même au cœur du juste il empreint son image.
Il doit venger sa cause & punir les pervers.
Mais comment! dans quel tems? & dans quel Univers?*

*Ici la vertu pleure, & l'audace l'opprime;
L'innocence à genoux y tend la gorge au crime;
La fortune y domine, & tous y suit son char.
Ce globe infortuné fut formé pour César.
Hâtons nous de sortir d'une prison funeste.
Je te verrai sans ombre, ô vérité céleste!
Tu te caches de nous dans nos jours de sommeil:
Cette vie est un songe, & la mort un réveil.*

In this tragedy of a patriot and philosopher, the character of Cato appears to me to be one of the most complete that ever appeared on any stage: The Cato of Addison is, in my opinion, greatly superior to the Cornelia of Pierre Corneille, for he is continually great without ostentation; and the part of Cornelia, besides being an unnecessary one, is in many places too declamatory: she would always be the heroine, and Cato never perceives that he is the hero.

It is a great pity that so fine a piece should not be a complete tragedy: unconnected scenes, which often leave the stage empty, injudicious and tedious apart or *aside* speeches, cold and insipid amours, a conspiracy quite foreign to the piece, a certain Sempronius disgusted and killed on the stage; all these put together render the celebrated tragedy * of Cato a performance that our comedians would never venture to present, even if we were of the same way of thinking as the Romans, or the English themselves. The barbarism and irregularity of the theatre at London made an impression on Addison's better judgment: methinks, I see in him the Czar Peter, who, in reforming the Russians, still retained some prejudices of his education, and of the manners of his country.

The custom of introducing love, right or wrong, into dramatic works, passed over from Paris to London about the year 1660, with our ribbons and perukes. The ladies, who there as well as here embellish the theatre, would no

* After all, the tragedy of Cato is a cold, declamatory piece, which owed its great success upon the stage to the circumstances of the time at which it was exhibited.

longer suffer any other but love-scenes on the stage. The sage Addison had the effeminate complaisance to bend the severity of his character to the manners of his time, and spoiled a master-piece to comply with the reigning mode.

Since his time the pieces are become more regular, the people more difficult, and the authors more timid. I have seen very decent, but very flat, modern compositions: it seems as if the English poets had hitherto been born to produce only irregular beauties.

The poetic genius of the English resembles, at this day, a spreading tree planted by nature, shooting forth at random a thousand branches, and growing with unequal strength: it dies if you force its nature, or shape it into a regular tree, fit for the gardens of Marly.



ON THE ENGLISH COMEDY.

IF in most of the English tragedies the heroes are awkward and the heroines extravagant, in return the stile is more natural in comedy; but then this stile would appear to us rather the stile of debauchery than of politeness: it distinguishes every thing by its proper name; a woman, enraged at her lover, wishes him the pox; a drunkard, in a piece that is very often performed, is disguised like a priest, makes a great riot, and is arrested by the watch: he calls himself a Curate; he is asked what cure he has; and

and he replies, An excellent one for the. . . .
 In one of the most decent comedies, *The Careless Husband*, this husband is represented having his head rubbed by a servant-maid, who is seated by his side: his wife enters, and exclaims—To what power may one not arrive by being a whore! Some Cynics justify these gross expressions, and quote the example of Horace, who describes, by their proper names, all the parts of the human body, and all the pleasures they give. These are images that succeed with us only when properly veiled; but Horace, who seemed made for the stews as well as for the court, and who perfectly understood the customs of both, speaks as freely of the way of a man with a maid, as if he was describing a walk, or a collation. It has been observed, that the Romans, in the days of Augustus, were as polite as the Parisians are at present; and that this very Horace, who praises the emperor Augustus for reforming the manners, complied, without scruple, with the customs of the times, which permitted the promiscuous use of girls and boys, and of the proper names of things. Strange it is (if any thing can be said to be so) that Horace, while speaking the language of a debauchee, should be the favourite of a reformer; and that Ovid, for speaking only the language of gallantry, should be exiled by a debauchee, an impostor, an assassin, called *Octavius*, who acquired the empire by crimes which merited death.

However this be, Bayle pretends that expressions are indifferent, in which he, the Cynics, and the Stoics, deceive themselves; for every thing has different names which represent it
 under

under different aspects, and afford different ideas of it. The words "magistrate and lawyer, gentleman and 'squire, officer and sharper, monk and friar," have not the same signification. The consummation of marriage, and every thing that contributes to the completion of this great work, will be differently expressed by the parson, the husband, the physician, and the rake. The word the latter of these would make use of would awaken the idea of pleasure, the terms the physician would explain himself in would put you in mind of a dead body, the husband would make that understood with decency which the young libertine had described immodestly, and the parson would attempt to give you the idea of a sacrament. Words then are not in themselves indifferent; for they are not synonymous.

It must further be considered, that tho' the Romans permitted these gross expressions in satires, which were read but by a few people, they never suffered indecent words on the stage; for, as La Fontaine says, "Chaste are the ears, although the eyes are wanton." In a word, no expression should be made use of in public, which a modest woman would be ashamed to repeat.

The English have stolen, disguised, and mangled, most of Moliere's plays. They attempted to make a *Tartuffe*. It was impossible that this subject should succeed at London, because the portrait of a stranger affords very little pleasure. One of the blessings of the English nation is, that she has no *Tartuffes* *.

* Our author is very much mistaken if he thinks there are no religious hypocrites in England.

to have hypocrites, - it is necessary to have bigots; but the name of bigot is almost unknown there, while that of an honest man is common. He sees no dotards committing to others the care of their souls; no petty tyrants establishing a despotic empire, in some quarter of the city, over a set of superannuated females, who were once coquets, and always weak; and over men still more weak and despicable. Philosophy, liberty, and the climate, lead the way to misanthropy. London, which has no *Tartuffes*, abounds with Timons. The *Plain Dealer* is one of the best English comedies: it was wrote at the time when Charles II. and his splendid court, were endeavouring to laugh away the settled gloom that had overspread the nation. Wycherly, the author of this comedy, was the professed admirer of the duchess of Cleveland, the king's mistress. This man, who passed his life in the gay world, as it is called, painted its follies and absurdities in the strongest colours. The strokes are bolder in Wycherly's piece than in Moliere's; but they are not so delicate, nor so refined. The English author has corrected the only fault in Moliere's piece, the want of plot and intrigue: the English comedy is interesting, the intrigue is ingenious, but too bold for our manners.

A captain of a ship, of distinguished courage and frankness, and a professed despiser of mankind, has a sincere and prudent friend whom he mistrusts, and a mistress, by whom he is tenderly beloved, whom he slight: whilst he places all his confidence in a false friend, the most unworthy of men; and gives his heart to a jilt, the most perfidious of her sex.

He

He believes, however, that this woman is a Penelope, and this false friend a Cato: he sets out on an expedition against the Dutch, and leaves all his money, jewels, and other effects, in the hands of this woman to the care of this friend he so firmly relies on; while the true friend, whom he mistrusts, embarks with him, and the lady, to whom he has not deigned to pay the least regard, disguises herself in the habit of a page, and performs the voyage with him, without discovering her sex the whole time.

The captain's ship being blown up in an engagement, he returns to London in the utmost distress, accompanied by his friend and the page, without knowing the friendship of the one, or the love of the other. He goes immediately to that paragon of women from whom he expects to receive his strong box, and a fresh proof of her fidelity. He finds her married to the sharper he had confided in, and can get no account of the treasure he had committed to her charge. The good man will hardly believe that so virtuous a woman could be guilty of such baseness; when the better to convince him of it, this honest lady falls in love with the little page, and attempts to take him away by force: but as it is necessary, in a dramatic piece, that justice should take place, vice be punished, and virtue meet its reward, at the close of the catastrophe, the captain supplied the place of the page, goes to bed to his inconstant mistress, cuckolds his treacherous friend, runs him through the body, recovers the remains of his effects, and marries his page. You will observe, that this piece is interlarded with an old litigious woman, related to the captain,

who is one of the merriest creatures, and one of the best characters, on the stage.

- Wycherly has taken another piece from Moliere not less bold and singular; 'tis a sort of a "School for Women." The principal character in the piece is a drole libertine, the terror of the husbands of London; who, to make sure of his business, spreads a report, that, in a late illness, his surgeons had found it necessary to make him an eunuch. Having this curious character, the husbands grant him free access to their wives, and his only difficulty is where to fix his choice. However, at last, he gives the preference to a little country-woman, who has a great share of innocence, with a natural warmth of constitution, by which she makes her husband a cuckold with a good-will and readiness that far exceeds the premeditated malice of experienced dames. This piece is not indeed "The School of Morality;" but it is "The School of Wit and true comic Humour."

The comedies of Sir John Vanbrugh are more facetious, but less ingenious. The knight was a man of pleasure, and besides a poet and an architect. It is remarked, that he wrote as delicately and as elegantly as he built clumsily: it was he who built the famous castle of Blenheim, the heavy but durable monument of our unfortunate battle of Hochster. If the apartments were only as large as the walls are thick, this mansion would be convenient enough. In Sir John Vanbrugh's epitaph, the earth is invoked to lie heavy on him, who, when living, had laid such heavy loads upon it. This gentleman took a tour into France just before the curious war of 1701, and was put into the Bastile, where he remained some time, without knowing what it

was that had procured him this mark of distinction from our ministry. He wrote a comedy in the Bastile, and, what is in my opinion very remarkable, there is not in all the piece the least stroke against the country where he suffered this violence.

Of all the English writers, the late Mr. Congreve has carried the glory of the comic theatre to the highest pitch. He wrote but a few pieces, but they are all excellent of their kind: the laws of the drama are strictly observed in them; they are full of characters elegantly varied; no mean pleasantry, not the least indecency, is introduced: you find in every part the language of politeness, even in describing the actions of knaves; which proves that he knew the world, and kept what is called good company. His comedies are the most sprightly and correct, Sir John Vanbrugh's the gayest, and Wycherly's the boldest. It is to be observed, that none of these sublime wits have spoken ill of Moliere: it is only writers of no repute that have villify'd this great man. In a word, do not expect from me any extracts from these English performances that I am so great an advocate for; nor that I should give you a single *bon mot* or jest from Congreve or Wycherly. One cannot laugh in a translation. If you would be acquainted with the English comedy, you must go to London: you must reside there three years; you must learn the language perfectly, and constantly frequent the theatre. I take no great pleasure in reading Plautus or Aristophanes, because I am neither Greek nor Roman. The delicate turn of *bon mots*, the allusion, and the *a-propos*, is all lost to a foreigner.

It is not the same in tragedy ; that consists alone in the sublime passions, and heroic fooleries, consecrated by the stale error of fables and histories. *Œdipus* and *Electra* belong as much to us, to the English, and to the Spaniards, as to the Greeks : but true comedy is the living picture of the absurdities of a country ; and, if you are not thoroughly acquainted with the country, you can hardly judge of the painting.

It has been objected to the English, that their scene is bloody, and often covered with dead bodies ; that their gladiators fight half naked before young girls, and often return from the combat with the loss of a nose or a cheek. In answer to this, they tell you, that they imitate the Greeks in tragedy, and the Romans in the act of cutting off noses : but their theatre is widely different from that of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* ; and, with respect to the Romans, it must be acknowledged, that a nose or a cheek are trifles in comparison of that multitude of victims that mutually butchered each other in the circus for the diversion of the Roman ladies.

The English have sometimes had dances in their comedies, which were allegorical, and of a very singular taste. Despotism and a republican state were represented by a very gallant dance in the year 1709. A king appears in the dance, who, after a few capers, gives his prime minister a very severe kick on the the minister bestows it on a second person, the second on a third, and, in fine, he who received the last represented the bulk of the nation, which had no-body to revenge itself on : all was performed in cadence. The Republican government

ment was represented by a round dance, where every one equally received and returned the blow. This, however, is the country that has given birth to Addisons, Popes, Lockes, and Newtons.



On COURTIERs who have cultivated LEARNING.

THERE was a time when the arts were cultivated in France by persons of the first distinction; even the courtiers applied themselves to the Belles Lettres, in spite of that dissipation, that taste for trifles, and that passion for intrigue, which are the deities of this country. It appears to me, that at present learning is not the reigning taste at court. Perhaps the passion of studying may one day return to us. The king has it in his power to do what he pleases with this nation. In England it is common to study, and learning is more in esteem there than with us. This advantage is a necessary consequence of their form of government. There are about eight hundred persons at London that have a right to speak in public, and to support the interest of the nation: about five or six thousand more pretend in their turns to the same happiness; all the rest erect themselves into judges of these, and every one gives his thoughts in print on the public affairs. Thus the whole nation is under a kind of necessity of being instructed. Nothing is talked of but the Athenian and Ro-

man governments. It is necessary, nevertheless, to read the authors who have treated of them. This study naturally leads to that of the *Belles-lettres*. In general men have the spirit or genius of their peculiar condition. Why have our magistrates, our physicians, and many of our ecclesiastics in general, more learning, taste, and judgment, than are to be found among other professions? It is because their station requires the cultivation of the mind, as that of a merchant demands a knowledge of commerce.

It is not long since a very young English nobleman paid me a visit at Paris on his return from Italy: he had composed a poetical description of that country, as politely wrote as any of lord Rochester's verses, or those of our Chalieux, our Sarasins, or our Chapelles. The translation I have made of them is so far from approaching the energy and lively humour of the original, that I am obliged sincerely to ask pardon of the author and those who understand English: however, as I have no other way of making my lord Harvey's verses known, take them in my language—

*Qu'ai-je donc vu dans l'Italie ?
Orgueil, astuce ; & pauvreté ;
Grands complimens, peu de bonté,
Et beaucoup de cérémonie.*

*L'extravagante Comédie,
Que souvent l'Inquisition.
Veut qu'on nomme Religion,
Mais qu'ici nous nommons folie.*

*La nature en vain beinfaisante
Veut enrichir ces lieux charmans ;*

*Des Pretres la main désolante
Etouffe ses plus beaux présens.*

*Les Monsignor, soi disans grands,
Seuls dans leurs Palais magnifiques,
Y sont d'illustres fainéans,
Sans argent & sans domestiques.*

*Pour les petits, sans liberté,
Martyrs du joug qui les domine ;
Ils ont fait vœu de pauvreté,
Priants Dieu par oisiveté.
Et toujours jeûnans par famine.*

*Ces beaux lieux du Pape bénis
Semblent habités par les Diables ;
Et les habitans misérables
Sont damnés dans le Paradis.*

I am not of Lord Harvey's opinion. There are countries in Italy which are very unfortunate, because foreigners have for a long time been fighting for the government of them ; but there are others where the people are neither so beggarly nor so foolish as he describes them.

OF THE
EARL of ROCHESTER,
AND
MR. WALLER.

THE earl of Rochester's reputation is universally known. Mr. de St. Evremond has taken great notice of him ; but he has only
H 5 made

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made us acquainted with the celebrated Rochester as a man of pleasure and intrigue. I propose to distinguish him as the man of genius and the poet. Among other works that are fraught with that lively imagination which he alone possessed, he wrote some satires on the same subjects as our celebrated Despreaux. I know nothing more useful towards perfecting true taste, than the comparing the works of great men who have exercised their talents on the same subject. Observe in what manner Despreaux speaks against human reason in his Satire on Man :

*Cependant à le voir, plein de vapeurs légères,
Soi-même se bercer de ses propres chimères,
Lui seul de la Nature est la base & l'appui,
Et le dixième Ciel ne tourne que pour lui.
De tous les animaux il est ici le maître ;
Qui pourrait le nier ? poursuis-tu : Moi peut-être.
Ce maître prétendu, qui leur donne des loix,
Ce Roi des animaux, combien a-t-il de Rois !*

Behold him of his boasted reason vain,
Drunk with the fumes of his distemper'd brain ;
Of nature he the base, and corner-stone ;
The Heav'n of Heav'ns revolves for him alone ;
Of all that breathes on earth the sov'reign lord,
And who will dare to doubt that sov'reign's
word ?

Why, faith, my friend, that doubt belongs to
me,

This king of beasts, how many kings has he ?

Observe likewise how very nearly Lord Rochester expresses himself on the same subject in his Satire on Man ; but let the reader always re-

member, that mine are free translations of the English poets, and that the curb of our versification, and the delicate decorum of our language, will never form an equivalent for the impetuous flow of the English stile.

*Cet esprit que je hais, cet esprit plein d'erreur,
Ce n'est pas ma raison, c'est la tienne, Docteur ;
C'est la raison frivole, inquiète, orgueilleuse,
Des sages animaux rivale dédaigneuse,
Qui croit entr'eux & l'Ange occuper le milieu,
Et pense être ici bas l'image de son Dieu.
Vil atome imparfait, qui croit, doute, dispute,
Rampe, s'élève, tombe, & nie encor sa chute,
Qui nous dit, je suis libre, en nous montrant ses
fers,
Et dont l'œil trouble & faux croit percer l'Univers.
Allez, réverends fous, bienheureux fanatiques,
Compilez bien l'amas de vos riens scholastiques.
Pères de visions, & d'énigmes sacrés,
Auteurs du labyrinthe où vous vous égarez,
Allez obscurément éclaircir vos mystères,
Et courez dans l'école adorer vos chimères.
Il est d'autres erreurs, il est de ces dévots
Condamnés par eux même à l'ennui du repos.
Ce mystique encloîtré, fier de son indolence,
Tranquille au sein de Dieu, qu'y peut-il faire? Il
pense*

*Non, tu ne penses point, tu végètes, tu dors ;
Inutile à la terre, & mis au rang des morts,
Ton esprit énervé croupit dans la mollesse.
Réveille-toi, sois homme, & sors de ton yvresse.
L'homme est né pour agir, & tu prétens penser !*

It is this very reason I despise ;
This supernat'ral gift, that makes a mite
Thinks he's the image of the infinite ;

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Comparing this short life, void of all rest,
To the eternal and the ever blest.

This busy puzzling stirrer up of doubt,
That frames deep mysteries, then finds 'em out,
Filling with frantick crowds of thinking fools,
These reverend bedlams, colleges, and schools;
Borne on whose wings, each heavy sot can
pierce

The limits of the boundless universe ;

* * * * *

'Tis this exalted power whose business lies
In nonsense and impossibilities ;
This made a whimsical philosopher
Before the spacious world his tub prefer ;
And we have modern coxcombs who
Retire to think, 'cause they have nought to do.
But thoughts are given for action's govern-
ment ;

Where action ceases ; thought's impertinent.
Our sphere of action is life's happiness ;
And he who thinks beyond, is like an ass.

Be these ideas true or false, it is certain
that they are expressed with that energy which
constitutes the poet. I shall guard against
examining them as a philosopher, and not quit
the pencil for the compass: my only end in this
letter is to make known the genius of the Eng-
lish poets ; and this point I shall continue to
adhere to.

The celebrated Waller has been much talked
of in France. La Fontaine, St. Evremond,
and Bayle, have made his eulogium ; but little
more is known of him than his name. He had
very near the same degree of reputation at Lon-
don, that Voiture had at Paris ; and I think he
merited

merited it more. Voiture lived at a time when the people were just bursting the bands of barbarism, and were yet in a state of ignorance. Every one wanted genius, but none had it at that time. Witticisms were sought after instead of ideas: false stones are much easier found than diamonds.

Voiture, born with an easy but frivolous genius, was the first who made a figure in this dawn of the French literature. Had he come after those great men who have adorned the age of Lewis XIV. he would have been under a necessity of possessing something more than mere wit. His compositions might do well enough to amuse a private family, but are by no means worthy of being transmitted to posterity. It is true, Boileau praises him; but it is only in his first satires, that is to say, before his taste was completely formed; he was then but young, and in an age when we form our opinions of men rather by the reputation they have acquired, than by their real merit. And besides, Boileau was often very unjust both in his praises and in his censures. He extolled Segrais, whom nobody reads; he censured Quinault, whom every one repeats by heart; and he speaks not a syllable of la Fontaine.

Waller, tho' a better poet than Voiture, was yet short of perfection. His compositions, which are full of gallantry, breathe an air of easy gracefulness; but his negligence makes them often languid, besides that his pieces are extremely disfigured with false thoughts. The English understood not in his time the secret of writing with purity and correctness. His serious works are manly and vigorous, a circumstance

no one would have looked for from the perusal of his other performances. His funeral panegyric on Oliver Cromwell, with all its faults, passes for a master-piece. To understand this poem it is necessary to know, that Cromwell died on the same day on which a prodigious storm happened. It begins in this manner :

*Il n'est plus, c'en est fait, soumettons-nous au sort.
Le Ciel a signalé ce jour par des tempêtes,
Et la voix du tonnerre élatant sur nos têtes,
Vient d'annoncer sa mort.
Par ses derniers soupirs il ébranle cette Isle,
Cette Isle, que son bras fit trembler tant de fois,
Quand dans le cours de ses exploits
Il brisait la tête des Rois,
Et soumettait un peuple, à son joug seul docile.
Mer, tu t'en es troublée : ô Mer ! tes flots émus
Semblent dire en grondant aux plus lointains rivages,
Que l'effroi de la Terre & ton Maître n'est plus.
Tel au Ciel autrefois s'envola Romulus,
Tel il quita la Terre au milieu des orages,
Tel d'un peuple guerrier il reçut les hommages ;
Obéi dans sa vie, à sa mort adoré,
Son palais fut un temple, &c.*

We must resign ; Heav'n his great soul does
claim
In storms as loud as his immortal fame.
His dying groans, his last breath shake our isle ;
And trees uncut fall for his funeral pile :
About his palace their broad roots are tost
Into the air ; so Romulus was lost.

Now

Now Rome in such a tempest mis'd her king,
And from obeying fell to worshipping.
On Oeta's top thus Hercules lay dead,
With ruin'd oaks and pines about him spread ;
Those his vast fury from the mountain rent :
Our dying hero from the continent
Ravish'd whole towns, and forts from Spaniards
rest,

As this last legacy to Britain left.
The ocean, which so long our hopes confin'd,
Could give no limits to his vaster mind :
Our bounds enlargement was his latest toil ;
Nor hath he left us prisoners to our isle.
Under the tropic is our language spoke,
And part of Flanders hath receiv'd our yoke.

From civil broils he did us disengage ;
Found nobler objects for our martial rage :
And with wise conduct to his country shew'd,
The ancient way of conquering abroad.

Ungrateful then, if we no tears allow
To him that gave us peace and empire too !
Princes that fear'd him, grieve, concern'd to
see

No pitch of glory from the grave is free.
Nature herself took notice of his death,
And sighing swell'd the seas with such a breath,
That to the remotest shores her billow roll'd,
Th' approaching fate of their great ruler told.

It was on occasion of this panegyric on Cromwell that Waller made Charles II. that famous answer, recorded in Bayle's dictionary: The king, whom Waller, according to the old custom between kings and poets, had waited upon, in order to present him with a poem stuffed with praises, reproached him with having written a bet-

ter

ter for Oliver. Waller answered, "Sir, we poets succeed much better in fiction than in truth." This answer was not so sincere as that of the Dutch ambassador, who, on the same king's complaining, that his nation had shewed less respect for him than for Cromwell, made answer, "Ah! Sir, Cromwell was quite a very different sort of a man." There are courtiers even in England, and Waller was certainly one in the truest sense of the word; but I consider men, after their death, by their works only: all the rest is with me wholly buried in oblivion. I will only remark, that Waller, born in a court, with a fortune of three thousand pounds a-year, had neither the silly pride nor the stupidity to abandon the talent with which nature had endowed him. The Earls of Dorset and Buckingham, my lord Halifax, and many others, did not think they derogated from their high rank and quality in becoming excellent poets, and illustrious writers. Their works certainly do them more honour than their titles. They have cultivated letters, as if the making of their fortunes had depended on their studies. They have moreover rendered the arts and sciences respectable in the eyes of the people, who in every thing stand in need of being guided by the great, and who, notwithstanding, are less influenced by their example in England than in any other country in the universe.

ON PRIOR; that singular Poem called
HUDIBRAS; and Dean SWIFT.

WHEN Prior first came over to France as ambassador-plenipotentiary from Q. Anne to settle the terms of peace granted to Lewis XIV. and previous to the arrival of Lord Bolingbroke, who signed the treaty; when this peer, I say, first came to France, no one imagined him to be at once a statesman and a poet. France has since paid England in her own coin; for cardinal Du Bois sent our Des Touches to London, who passed as little for a poet in England, as Prior did in France. Prior, the plenipotentiary, was originally a waiter in a tavern; the earl of Dorset, who himself was an excellent poet, and besides loved his bottle, found him one day reading Horace on a bench in the tavern, just as my lord Ilay found his gardener's boy reading Newton. Ilay made his young gardener a great philosopher, and Dorset made a very pleasant poet of his waiter.

Alma, or the History of the Soul, wrote by this poet, is the most natural history that has been given till now, of that being so well perceived, and so little understood. The soul has her residence at first in the extremities of the body, in the feet and hands of children; from thence she insensibly places herself in the centre of the body at the age of puberty; afterwards she takes possession of the heart, where she produces sentiments of love, gallantry, and heroism. In a still riper age, she mounts upwards to the head, where she reasons in the best manner

manner she is able; 'till at last, in old age, she retires the Lord knows whither, like the sap of an old tree, which evaporates, and is at last wholly lost. Possibly this work may be rather too prolix; all pleasantry ought to be concise, and perhaps the serious kind would hardly be the worse for a small spice of this quality.

The same Prior has composed a small poem on the battle of Hochstet. This is by no means comparable to his History of the Soul; the only good thing in it is his apostrophe to Boileau.

*Satyrique flateur, toi qui pris tant de peine
Pour chanter que Louis n'a point passé le Rhin, &c.*

Pindar, that eagle, mounts the skies,
While virtue leads the noble way;
Too like a vulture Boileau flies,
Where sordid int'rest shews the way.
When once the poet's honour ceases,
From reason far his transports rove;
And Boileau for eight hundred pieces,
Makes Louis take the wall of Jove.

Our plenipotentiary concludes with a paraphrase, consisting of five hundred verses on these words, which are commonly ascribed to Solomon, *All is vanity*. It were no difficult matter to have written five thousand on the same topic. But wo to him that says all he is able to say.

Queen Anne being dead, and a change happening in the ministry, the peace of which Prior had sketched the first outlines, became the detestation of the people; and the political bard had no other resource left him, but an edition of his works, published by a subscription set on

foot

foot by those of his own party; after which he died like a philosopher, that is, as every honest Englishman dies, or at least is thought to die.

I should be glad now to give you a slight idea of the poetical writings of the earl of Roscommon and Dorset; but I am sensible this would make a little volume, and, after all, I should be able to give you but a very imperfect idea of so many different pieces. Poetry is akin to Music, which must be heard, to form any judgment of its excellence. Even when I attempt to translate some passages of these foreign poets, I can at best but give you a very imperfect notion of their harmony or numbers; and I find it utterly impossible to convey to you the smallest notion of their cadences.

But above all, the English poem called Hudibras, is what puzzles me most to make you at all acquainted with. It is a piece wholly in the comic or burlesque stile, tho' the subject is of no less consequence than the civil wars of Cromwell. This cruel war, which has been the occasion of so many tears, and which has caused such an ocean of blood to be spilt, has notwithstanding given birth to a poem, which I defy the gravest reader to peruse, without laughing. There is something of this contrasted kind to be met with in our Menippean Satire. The Romans would certainly never have thought of writing a burlesque poem on the civil wars of Cæsar and Pompey, or on the proscriptions of Antony and Augustus. Whence then comes it to pass, that the dreadful disasters occasioned in France by the League, and those in England between the king and parliament,

have

have given rise to so much pleasantry? It is undoubtedly true, that those fatal broils had actually somewhat exceedingly ridiculous at bottom. The citizens of Paris, at the head of the faction of the Sixteen, mingled abundance of folly and impertinence with the horrors of faction. The intrigues of the women, the league, and the monks, had a droll aspect, notwithstanding those numberless calamities of which they were the occasion. The theological disputes, and the fanaticism of the Puritans in England, were fruitful fields for ridicule; and this source of ridicule, well laid open, was capable of affording large scope for pleasantry, after these tragical horrors, under which it lay concealed, were once removed. Altho' the bull *Unigenitus* has been the occasion of much bloodshed, yet is not the little poem of *Philotamus* the less adapted to the subject; and the only reproach that can, with any justice, be made him is, that he is not so merry and diverting, and so diversified, as he ought to be, and that he does not introduce in the course of the work, what he promises in the beginning.

The poem *Hudibras* I am now mentioning to you, seems to be a mixture of the *Menippéan Satire* with *Don Quixote*, with this double advantage, that it is written in verse, and that it is infinitely more witty. As for the *Menippéan Satire*, it cannot stand in competition with it, and is really but a very middling performance. But his superabundance of wit is what has made him inferior to *Don Quixote*. Taste, pleasing simplicity, the art of narration, of properly disposing the different adventures, of checking the natural fertility of one's genius,
are

are, in my humble opinion, infinitely superior to mere wit. Hence it is, that Don Quixote is read by all the nations of Europe, whilst Hudibras affords entertainment only for those of his own country.

The name of this extraordinary author is Butler: he was cotemporary with Milton, and had an infinitely greater share of reputation than he, from the pleasantry and humour of his poem; whereas that of Milton is very dismal. Butler made the enemies of Charles II. the subject of universal ridicule, and had this for his sole recompense, that the king often did him the honour to quote his verses. The battles of the knight Hudibras were much better known than those of the angels and devils of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. But the court of England treated the witty and diverting Butler, as ill as the court above did the grave Milton, for both were in a state of starving, or very near it.

The hero of Butler's poem was no feigned personage, like the Don Quixote of Michael Cervantes; he was actually a knight-baronet, that had formerly been one of Cromwell's enthusiasts, in whose service he bore the office of a colonel. His name was Sir Samuel Luke. In order to understand the spirit of this poem, which is wholly singular in its kind, there will be a necessity of retrenching, at least three-fourths of the passages we want to translate; for Butler is an author who never thinks he has said enough. I have therefore reduced to about fourscore verses, the first four hundred in his work, to avoid a disgusting prolixity.

Quand les profanes & les Saints
 Dans l'Angleterre étaient aux prises,
 Qu'on se battait pour des Eglises,
 Aussi fort que pour des Catins;
 Lorsqu'Anglicans & Puritains
 Faisaient une si rude guerre,
 Et qu'au sortir du cabaret
 Les orateurs de Nazareth
 Allaient battre la caisse en chaire;
 Que partout sans savoir pourquoi,
 Au nom du Ciel, au nom du Roi,
 Les gens d'armes courraient la terre;
 Alors Monsieur le Chevalier,
 Longtems oisif ainsi qu'Achile,
 Tout rempli d'une sainte bile,
 Suivi de son grand écuyer,
 S'échapa de son poulaillier,
 Avec son sabre & l'Evangile,
 Et s'avisa de guerroyer.

Sire Hudibras, cet homme rare,
 Etait, dit-on, rempli d'honneur,
 Avait de l'esprit & du cœur,
 Mais il en était fort avare.
 D'ailleurs par un talent nouveau,
 Il était tout propre au barreau,
 Ainsi qu'à la guerre cruelle;
 Grand sur les bancs, grand sur la selle,
 Dans les camps & dans un bureau;
 Semblable à ces rats amphibies,
 Qui paraissant avoir deux vies,
 Son rats de campagne & rats d'eau.
 Mais malgré sa grande éloquence,
 Et son mérite & sa prudence,
 Il passa chez quelques savants
 Pour être un de ces instruments,

Dont

*Dont les fripons avec adresse
Savent user sans dire mot,
Et qu'ils tournent avec souplesse;
Cet instrument s'appelle un sot.
Ce n'est pas qu'en Théologie,
En Logique, en Astrologie,
Il ne fût un Docteur subtil;
En quatre il séparait un fil,
Disputant sans jamais se rendre,
Changeant de thèse tout-à-coup,
Toujours prêt à parler beaucoup,
Quand il fallait ne point s'étendre.*

*D'Hudibras la Religion
Était tout comme sa raison,
Vuide de sens & fort profonde.
Le Puritanisme divin,
La meilleure secte du monde,
Et qui certes n'a rien d'humain;
La vraie Eglise militante,
Qui prêche un pistolet en main,
Pour mieux convertir son prochain,
A grands coups de sabre argumente,
Qui promet les célestes biens
Par le gibet & par la corde,
Et damne sans miséricorde
Les péchés des autres Chrétiens,
Pour se mieux pardonner les siens;
Secte qui toujours détruisante
Se détruit elle-même enfin:
Tel Samson de sa main puissante
Brisa le temple Philistin,
Mais il périt par sa vengeance,
Et lui-même il s'ensevelit,
Ecrasé sous la chute immense
De ce temple qu'il démolit.*

*Au nez du Chevalier antique
 Deux grandes moustaches pendaient,
 A qui les Parques attachaient
 Le destin de la République.
 Il les garde soigneusement,
 Et si jamais on les arrache,
 C'est la chute du Parlement ;
 L'Etat entier en ce moment
 Doit tomber avec sa moustache.
 Ainsi Taliacotius
 Grand Esculape d'Etrurie,
 Répara tous les nez perdus
 Par une nouvelle industrie :
 Il vous prenait adroitement
 Un morceau du cu d'un pauvre homme,
 L'appliquait au nez proprement ;
 Enfin il arrivait qu'en somme,
 Tout juste à la mort du prêteur
 Tombait le nez de l'emprunteur,
 Et souvent dans la même bière,
 Par justice & par bon accord,
 On remettait au gré du mort
 Le nez auprès de son derrière.*

*Notre grand Héros d'Albion,
 Grimpé dessus sa haridelle
 Pour venger la Religion
 Avait à l'arçon de sa selle,
 Deux pistolets & du jambon.
 C'était de tout tems sa manière ;
 Sachant que si sa talonnière
 Pique une moitié du cheval
 L'autre moitié de l'animal
 Ne resterait point en arrière.
 Voilà donc Hudibras parti ;
 Que Dieu bénisse son voyage,
 Ses argumens & son parti,
 Sa barbe rousse & son courage.*

A man whose imagination was capable of containing a tenth part of the *vis comica*, true or false, that predominates through every part of this work, would still be extremely diverting; but at the same time he would do well to have a care how he attempts to translate Hudibras: for how is it possible to excite laughter in readers who are foreigners, by means of the follies of persons long since forgotten in the very nation where they were once so famous? Dante is now no longer read in Europe, because his work is perpetually alluding to facts utterly unknown. The case is exactly the same with Hudibras. Most of the ridicule in this work falls on the theology and divines of his own time. A commentary is therefore wanted to every line. Humour that stands in need of being explained, from that moment ceases to be such; and it is very rare to find an explainer of the wit of others, have any of his own.

This is one reason why it will never be possible for the ingenious Dr. Swift to be understood in France, though he has justly acquired the title of the English Rabelais. He enjoys also the honour of the priesthood, while he laughs at the whole cloth. Rabelais, however, was in every respect superior to his age, though Swift is infinitely superior to Rabelais.

Our curate of Meudon, in his extravagant and unintelligible book, has diffused abundance of gaiety, and a still greater quantity of impertinence. He was equally full of prolixity, order, and erudition. A good story, which fills two pages, is bought at the expence of whole volumes of nonsense. There are none

but those of a capricious taste, that pique themselves on understanding and relishing the whole of his performance. The rest of the nation laugh at the pleasantries of Rabelais, whilst they despise his work, and he passes with them for the chief of buffoons. People are sorry that a man with so much wit should make such a low use of it. In short, it is a drunken philosopher, that writes only when he was not able to stand.

Dr. Swift is Rabelais in his right senses, but polished by frequenting the best company. It is true he has not the gaiety of the former, but he is possessed of all that delicacy, judgment, proper choice of matter, and that exquisite taste which is wholly wanting in the curate of Meudon. His verses are of a singular cast, and almost utterly inimitable. True pleasantry is his talent in prose and verse; but to understand him fully, there is a necessity to take a short trip into his country.

In this country, which appears so extraordinary to the rest of mankind, nobody was much surprised to see the reverend Dr. Swift, dean of a cathedral, laughing in his *Tale of a Tub* at Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists. He alledges in his own vindication, that he left Christianity untouched. He pretends to have shewn all manner of respect to the father, by giving a hearty drubbing to each of the three sons. Nice people will be apt to find this apology rather too slight for what passes with them for a flagrant enormity.

This famous *Tale of a Tub* is an imitation of the ancient tale of the Three Invisible Rings, which a certain father bequeathed to his three

children. These three rings were the Jewish, the Christian, and the Mahometan religions. It is likewise an imitation of the History of Mero and Enegu, by Fontenelle. Mero was the anagram of Rome, and Enegu that of Geneva. These were two sisters, who pretended each to have the right of succession to the kingdom of their father. Mero was the first that mounted the throne. Fontenelle represents her as a sorceress, who was wont to steal bread, and who performed her enchantments by the help of dead bodies. She is exactly lord *Peter* in Swift, whilst he is presenting a piece of bread to his two brothers, and tells them, "Friends, here is some excellent Burgundy, this partridge has a most exquisite flavour." The same lord *Peter* plays every where the part of Mero in Fontenelle.

Thus almost every composition is no more than an imitation. The hint of the Persian Letters is taken from the Turkish Spy. Boiardo has imitated Pulci, as Ariosto has imitated Boiardo. The most original geniuses borrow from each other. Michael Cervantes makes his Don Quixote a fool; but pray is Orlando any other? It would puzzle one to decide whether knight-errantry has been made more ridiculous by the grotesque painting of Cervantes, than by the luxuriant imagination of Ariosto. Metastasio has taken the greatest part of his operas from our French tragedies. Several English writers have copied us, without saying one word of the matter. It is with books, as it is with the fires in our houses; one goes and lights his candle at his neighbour's, and then lights one of his own: whence he communi-

cates to his neighbours that want his assistance, so that it becomes absolutely the property of every one.

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## ON P O P E.

**I**FANCY it will be more easy for you to form some idea of Mr. Pope. He is in my opinion the most elegant, the most correct, and, what is still more difficult to find, the most harmonious poet that England has hitherto produced. He has reduced the shrill harshness of the English trumpet, to the soft sweetness of the Lydian flute. His Essay on Criticism will soon be sufficiently known in France, by the translations in verse which the abbé du Renel is about to publish.

What follows is a passage from his poem called the *Rape of the Lock*, which I have lately translated with my usual liberty; for I must again repeat it, I know nothing so execrable as a literal translation of a piece of poetry.

*Umbriel à l'instant, vieux Gnome rechigné,  
Va, d'une aîle pesante, & d'un air renfrogné;  
Chercher en murmurant la caverne profonde,  
Où loin des doux rayons, que répand l'œil du monde,  
La Déesse aux vapeurs a choisi son séjour:  
Les tristes Aquilons y sifflent à l'entour,  
Et le soufle mal-sain de leur aride haleine  
Y porte aux environs la fièvre & la migraine.  
Sur un riche sofa, derrière un paravent,  
Loin des flambeaux, du bruit, des parleurs & du  
vent,*

*La*

La quinteuse Déesse incessamment repose,  
 Le cœur gros de chagrin, sans en sçavoir la cause,  
 N'ayant pensé jamais, l'esprit toujours troublé,  
 L'œil chargé, le teint pâle, & l'hypocondre enflé.  
 La médisante Envie est assise auprès d'elle,  
 Vieux spectre féminin, décrépète pucelle,  
 Avec un air devout déchirant son prochain,  
 Et chanfonnant les gens, l'Evangile à la main.  
 Sur un lit plein de fleurs, négligemment panchée,  
 Une jeune beauté non loin d'elle est couchée;  
 C'est l'affectation, qui grasseye en parlant,  
 Ecoute sans entendre, & lorgne en regardant :  
 Qui rougit sans pudeur, & rit de tout sans joie,  
 De cent maux différens prétend qu'elle est la proie,  
 Et pleine de santé sous le rouge & le fard,  
 Se plaint avec mollesse, & se pâme avec art.

Umbriel, a dusky melancholy sprite,  
 As ever sullied the fair face of light,  
 Down to the central earth, his proper scene,  
 Repairs to search the gloomy cave of spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,  
 And in a vapour reach'd the dismal dome.  
 No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,  
 The dreaded east is all the wind that blows;  
 Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,  
 And screen'd in shades from day's detested  
 glare,  
 She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,  
 Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne, alike in  
 place,  
 But differing far in figure and in face :

Here stood *Ill-Nature*, like an ancient maid,  
 Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd;  
 With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights,  
 and noons,  
 Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons.  
 There Affectation, with a sickly mien,  
 Shews in her cheek the roses of eighteen.  
 Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,  
 Faints into airs, and languishes with pride:  
 On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe;  
 Wrapt in a gown, for sickness and for show.

Pope's Essay on Man is in my opinion the finest, the most useful, and the sublimest didactic poem that has ever been written in any language. The ground-work of the whole, it is true, may be found in lord Shaftesbury's Characteristics, for which reason I cannot see why Mr. Pope has given all the honour of it to lord Bolingbroke, without mentioning a word of the famous Shaftesbury, the disciple of Locke.

As there is nothing in metaphysics but what has been often thought in every age and nation where the talents of the mind are cultivated, this system has a great conformity with that of Leibnitz; who pretends, that, of all possible worlds, God must certainly have chosen the best; and that, even in this best, all the irregularities of our globe, as well as the follies of its inhabitants, ought to have a place. It has also a resemblance to the notion of Plato, which says, that, in the infinite chain of beings, our earth, our bodies, and our souls, are so many necessary links. But neither Leibnitz nor Pope admit of those changes, which, according to Plato, have

happened

happened to those links of it, our souls and bodies. Plato, in his unintelligible prose, wrote like a poet; whilst Pope, in his admirable version, is truly a great philosopher. He says, all things have at all times been, even from the very infancy of nature, as they are; that is, as they ought to be: "Whatever is, is best." I could not help being pleased, I own, to find he agreed with me in a point which I had maintained several years since.

"You are filled with wonder to think God should have made man with faculties so limited, so ignorant, and so much short of true happiness. Why do not you rather wonder he did not make him infinitely more so?" When a Frenchman and an Englishman happen to agree in any point, you may swear they are then in the right.

The son of the famous Racine has published a letter of Pope addressed to him, with a recantation of this doctrine. This letter is written in the stile and manner of Fenelon: it was delivered him by Ramsay, the editor of *Telemachus*; that Ramsay who was the imitator of *Telemachus*, and much such another as Boyer was of *Cornelle*; that Scotch Ramsay who modestly demanded admittance into the French academy; in a word, by that Ramsay who was sadly disappointed at not being a doctor of the Sorbonne. This I know, as does every man of letters in England, that Pope, with whom I was very intimately acquainted, could hardly read French; spoke not one word of our language; never wrote one single syllable in the language not being capable to do it; and, if he ever wrote such a

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letter to the son of our Racine, God must certainly have endowed him with the gift of tongues, by way of recompence for having composed so wonderful a work as his Essay on Man.



ON THE  
ROYAL SOCIETY,  
AND  
ACADEMIES.

ALL great men have either been formed before the institution of academies, or at least without any assistance from them. Homer and Phidias, Sophocles and Apelles, Virgil and Vitruvius, Ariosto and Michael Angelo, belonged to no academy; Tasso met with no other advantages besides a few ill-grounded criticisms from that of La Crusca; nor was Newton indebted to the Royal Society of London for his discoveries in optics, gravitation, the doctrine of integrals, and chronology. Of what use then are academies? To keep alive that flame which great geniuses have kindled.

The Royal Society of London was formed in 1660, six years before our Academy of Sciences. This society bestows no premiums or rewards, as ours does; but then to make amends every member is perfectly at his liberty; there are none of those disagreeable distinctions invented by the Abbé Bignon, who divided the Academy of Sciences into literary members who had salaries,

ries, and mere honoraries who had no pretensions to learning. The society of London, wholly independent on, and unengaged by any but themselves, was composed of persons who as I have already observed, discovered the series of infinites, the laws of light and colours, those of gravity, the aberration of the fixed stars, the reflecting telescope, the fire-engine, the solar microscope, with many other inventions equally useful and astonishing. What more could those great men have done for the public utility, had they been either pensioners or honoraries?

The famous Dr. Swift, in the latter part of queen Anne's reign, formed the design of establishing an academy for the English language on the model of the French academy. This project was supported by the earl of Oxford, then at the head of the treasury, and still more by lord viscount Bolingbroke, who possessed the talent of speaking extempore in parliament with all that purity with which Swift wrote in his closet, and who would have been at once the patron and the ornament of this academy. The members who were to have composed it, were persons whose writings will last as long as the English language; namely, Dr. Swift; Mr. Prior, whom we have seen at our court, in a public character, and who is held in the same reputation in England as La Fontaine in France; Mr. Pope, the English Boileau; Mr. Congreve, who may be justly stiled their Moliere \*, with

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\* Never did any two authors write on the same subjects so differently as did Moliere and Congreve. Moliere distinguished himself by his natural simplicity, and Congreve by his unnatural wit.



several others whose names I cannot well remember; all of whom could not have failed to have rendered this body illustrious in its very infancy. But the queen unfortunately happening to die suddenly, the Whigs took it into their heads to bring the protectors of these if possible to the block or gallows; a mortal blow, as you may well imagine, to the *Belles-lettres*. The members who were to have composed this academy, would have had a prodigious advantage over the founders of ours. Swift, Prior, Congreve, Dryden, Pope, Addison, &c. had fixed the English language by their writings; whereas Chapelain, Colletet, Cassaigne, Faret, Cotin, our first academicians, were the scandal of our nation, and their names so ridiculous, that at this day, should any author have the misfortune to be called Chapelain or Cotin, he would be under a necessity of changing his name.

Besides, the English academy would have adopted a very different plan of operation from that of ours. One day one of the wits of that country asked me to shew him some of the memoirs of the French academy. I told him they had not written any memoirs, but they had printed about fourscore volumes of compliments. He glanced over one or two of them. He could by no means comprehend a single syllable of what they meant, though he very well understood all our good authors. All I can discover, said he, by this multitude of fine speeches, is, that after the new candidate has told them, that his predecessor was a very great man, that cardinal Richlieu was an exceeding great man, and chancellor Seguier a very eminent man; the director answered him in the same manner,

that echoed back the same expressions; adding, that the candidate might possibly be a great man; and as for himself, the director, he did not mean by all this to forfeit his title to be one among the rest. It is easy to discover by what kind of fatality almost all those academical discourses have done this body so little honour. *Vitium est temporis potius quam hominis.* The custom has been established insensibly, that every academician should repeat those elogiums at his reception: this was no more than to make it a kind of law, to tire the patience of the public. Should we afterwards enquire, how it came to pass, that the greatest geniuses who have entered into this society have sometimes made the worst harangues, the reason is very evident; it is, that they wanted to shine by treating a thread-bare subject in a manner different from all who had gone before them. The necessity of saying something, when one has not a syllable to say; the plague of mixing somewhat new in a subject already exhausted; and withal, that passion of shewing one's parts; are enough to make the greatest wit appear truly ridiculous. Not being able to find any thing but what has been said before, they rack their brains to give the old thoughts a new cloathing, by forced turns of expression; and have been compelled to speak without thinking; like people who make as if they were eating, whilst they are ready to perish with hunger. Instead of the law whereby the French academy have bound themselves to print all their discourses, which are, properly speaking, the whole of their works, methinks they had done better, had they made it a law to print none of them at all.

The academy of *Belles-lettres* have proposed a wiser and more advantageous end, which is that of presenting the public with a collection of memoirs, filled with researches and ingenious criticisms. Those memoirs are already in esteem amongst foreigners; only one would wish they had dipped somewhat deeper in certain subjects, and that they had entirely passed by some others without notice. We could have very well dispensed, for instance, with such disquisitions as the origin of the preference due to the right-hand above the left, with some other researches, which, though with titles not quite so ridiculous, are not less frivolous. The Academy of Sciences, in her more difficult, but more evidently useful enquiries, is wholly employed in the study of nature, and the perfecting the arts. It is to be believed, that studies, which are at once so profound and so closely pursued, calculations so exact, discoveries so nice and ingenious, and views so extensive, will one day produce something that may be greatly for the advantage of mankind.

The most useful discoveries have been made in the most barbarous ages; and it seems to be the lot of the most enlightened periods, and of the most learned boies, to reason about the inventions of the ignorant. We may know, after the long disputes of Mr. Huyghens and Mr. Renaud, the determination of the most advantageous angle of the rudder of a ship with her keel; but Christopher Columbus had discovered America without so much as dreaming of any such angle. I am far from inferring from this, that we ought to confine ourselves wholly to the uncertainty of blind practice; but it would be a happiness

a happiness if natural philosophers and geometricians would, as much as possible, join the practical part to the theory. Is it absolutely necessary, that what does most honour to the human mind should often be the least useful? A man who is possessed of the four common rules of arithmetic, with a natural stock of good sense, becomes an eminent merchant, a James Cœur, a Delmet, or a Bernard; whilst a poor algebraist passes his days in discovering wonderful relations and astonishing properties in numbers, but of no manner of use, and which would never have let him into the common course of exchange. All the arts are pretty much the same. There is a certain point, beyond which all is matter of mere curiosity. These ingenious but useful truths are like the stars, which are placed at such an infinite distance from us, that we reap not the least advantage from their beams.

As for the French academy, what advantage might she not afford to learning, to the language, and to the nation, if, instead of pestering the world every year with a magazine of fulsome compliments, they had published the good authors of the age of Lewis XIV. purged from all those faults in language that have crept into them? Corneille and Moliere are quite full of them. Fontaine swarms with such mistakes. Those at least might be pointed out that appear incapable of being mended. Europe, which reads our authors, might in them learn our language safely from all danger of a vicious idiom. Its purity would then be fixed for ever. The best French authors, carefully published at the king's expence, would be one of the most glorious monuments

monuments of the nation. I have heard that Boileau formerly made a proposal of this kind; and that it has been since renewed by one whose wit and good sense, as well as sound criticism, are well known; but with the common fate of many other useful projects, that of being approved and neglected.

It is very extraordinary, that Corneille, who composed the first of his good tragedies, at a time when the language was only beginning to be formed, should have wrote them with tolerable purity and great sublimity, and all the rest in a loose, incorrect, and even low stile, tho' Racine had then bestowed on the French language so much purity, so much sublimity and grace; and whilst Boileaux fixed it by the most exact correctness, precision, strength, fullness, energy, and harmony. Let any one but compare the *Berenice* of Racine with that of Corneille, one would imagine this latter to have been written in the age of *Tristan*. It would make one believe Corneille neglected his stile in proportion as he was under a greater necessity to support it, and that his sole emulation was to write, when it should have been to write well. His last twelve or thirteen tragedies are not only wretched, but in a very mean stile. What is still more surprising is, that, even in our own days, we have had plays, with other performances both in prose and verse, composed by academicians, who have neglected their language to such a degree, that one can hardly read ten verses in them without meeting with some barbarism. We may overlook a few faults in a good author; but where they grow numerous, it is impossible for such a work to support

the writer's reputation. A company of persons of good taste one day reckoned upwards of six hundred intolerable solecisms in a tragedy which had met with distinguished applause both at Paris and at court. Two or three instances of such unmerited success would be sufficient to corrupt the language past all possibility of recovery, and to plunge it into its antient barbarism, from whence it has been drawn by the assiduous labours of so many great men.

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## ON CROMWELL.

CROMWELL is commonly represented as one who was an impostor thro' the whole course of his life. This is what I can hardly believe. My opinion of the matter is, that he was first of all an enthusiast, but that afterwards he made his very fanaticism subservient to his greatness. A novice possessed of extreme religious fervour at twenty, often becomes a consummate knave at forty. In the great game of human life, men begin with being dupes, but end knaves. A statesman shall sometimes take for his chaplain a monk covered over with the little pedantry of his convent; fanatic, devout, credulous, awkward, and quite raw in the world, the monk acquires knowledge, politeness, learns to intrigue, till at last he supplants his patron.

Cromwell at first hardly knew what to make of himself, and was puzzled whether to be a churchman or a soldier. He was actually both. He made a campaign with Frederic-Henry prince of Orange in 1622, who was not only a man  
of

of great capacity himself, but also brother to two illustrious personages. When he returned to England, he entered into the service of bishop Williams, and was my lord's chaplain, whilst my lord was thought to be rather too great with his wife. His religious principles were those of the puritanical sect; so that he could not but mortally hate the bishop, nor could he have any great affection for kings. He was banished the bishop's family on account of his being a Puritan, and this accident was properly the fountain and first beginning of all his grandeur\*. The English parliament had declared against royalty and episcopacy, when some friends Cromwell had in that parliament procured him to be chosen for a borough. He may be said to have existed only from this time, and was turned of forty before he made any noise in the world. In vain had he studied the Bible, learned to wrangle about the institution of priests and deacons, and made some wretched sermons and libels: he was still in obscurity. I have seen a sermon of his pretty much like one of the Quakers harangues, in which one cannot discover the smallest traces of that persuasive eloquence †

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\* We know not where our author picked up these anecdotes; but we will venture to say they are not true. Cromwell had been a libertine in his youth; but he all at once became a fanatic; and was so engrossed by his exercises of devotion, that he neglected his temporal affairs, which were in great disorder when he was returned member of parliament for the town of Cambridge. He had attained his fortieth year before he embraced the military profession, and then the civil war had broke out.

† He never possessed the least talent for eloquence; on the contrary, his public harangues were insipid, perplexed, and often unintelligible.

by which he afterwards swayed the parliaments. The true reason of this is, he was much better qualified for the state than the church. But his eloquence consisted wholly in his air and in the tone of his voice; the single motion of that hand, that won so many battles, and killed so many Royalists, was more persuasive than all the studied periods of Cicero. It must also be acknowledged, that the reputation he acquired was wholly owing to his incomparable valour, which laid the first steps of that ladder, by which he reached the highest summit of human grandeur.

He began with serving as a volunteer desirous of making his fortune in the city of Hull\*, which was then besieged by the king. Here he performed so many gallant and successful exploits, that he was rewarded by the parliament with a gratification of about six thousand livres of our money. Such a present, bestowed by the parliament on a simple volunteer, was a sure prognostic their party must one day get the better. The king was not then in a condition to make such a present to his general officers, as the parliament gave on this occasion to their volunteers. With money and fanaticism, they must, in the long run, overcome all that stood in their way: they made Cromwell a colonel: then it was that his great talents for war began to display themselves; insomuch, that, when the parliament made the earl of Manchester

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\* He was not in the town of Hull, which was never besieged, though Sir John Hotham refused to surrender it to the king. The first specimen of Cromwell's soldiering was his raising a troop of horse for the service of the parliament, and quartering them at Cambridge.



their general, they made Cromwell a lieutenant-general, without passing through the intermediate ranks. Never did man seem more worthy of command ; never was there seen a greater share of prudence and activity, or a more daring and undaunted spirit, joined to such an infinity of resources as were in Cromwell. He was wounded in the battle of York ; and whilst the surgeons were beginning to dress his wound, he was told that his general lord Manchester was retreating, and the battle entirely lost. He runs to lord Manchester, whom he finds flying with some of his officers : he immediately takes him by the arm ; and, with an air of intrepidity and greatness, told him ; “ You are mistaken, my lord ; this is not the way the enemy have fled.” He leads him back near to the spot on which the battle was fought ; rallies in the night upwards of twelve thousand men ; exhorts them in the name of the Lord ; cites the examples of Moses, Gideon, and Joshua ; beseeches them by all means not to neglect to engage the victorious Royalists at break of day ; and entirely defeats them. Almost all the officers in his army were enthusiasts, who carried their Bibles tied to the pommel of their saddles : there was nothing talked of, either in the army or in parliament, but the overthrowing of Babylon, establishing the Lord’s worship in the new Jerusalem, and breaking the great idol. Cromwell, tho’ amidst an host of fools, grew wise at last, and be-thought himself, that it was better to guide them, than to be governed by them. The habit, however, of preaching like one inspired still remained with him. Imagine to yourself a Faquir, with his loins bound about with a gir-  
dle

dle of iron out of mere mortification, who afterwards pulls off his girdle, and falls to knocking down his brother Faquirs. This is Cromwell: he became full as good a politician as he was a soldier: he enters into an association with all the colonels of the army; and thus he forms his soldiers into a kind of republic, who force their general to abdicate. Another generalissimo is named, with whom he is presently dissatisfied: he governs the army, and with them the parliament, whom he at last compels to create him generalissimo. All this is certainly a great deal; but what is more remarkable is, that he gained every battle he fought, whether in Scotland, England, or Ireland; and gained them not like other generals, by being a mere spectator, solicitous about his own safety, but by continually charging the enemy in person; rallying his troops; by being present everywhere; often wounded; killing several of the Royalists with his own hand; like some furious grenadier, that delights in carnage.

In the midst of this cruel and bloody war, Cromwell was making love, and went with his Bible under his arm to lie with the wife of his major-general Lambert. This lady was in love with the earl of Holland, who was then serving in the royal army. Cromwell takes him prisoner in one of his battles, and has the pleasure to cut off his rival's head. His maxim was to cut off every enemy of any consequence, either in the field of battle, or by the hand of the executioner. He increased his power on every occasion by perpetually abusing it; and the depth of his designs want nothing of his natural ferocity. He enters the parliament; and taking

taking out his watch, throws it on the ground, and breaks it to pieces with this expression I will break you, just as I have done that watch. Some time after he returns, and dissolves them by his own authority, making them file off, as it were in review, before him. Each member was obliged, as he passed him, to make him a profound bow. One of them, it seems, thought proper to pass him with his hat on; when Cromwell, taking it off, threw it on the ground. Learn, says he, to shew me the proper respect.

After having insulted every crowned head, by cutting off that of the king his lawful sovereign, and when he had even begun his own reign, he sent his picture to queen Christina of Sweden. Marvel, a famous English poet, who made very good Latin verses, composed six lines on the occasion, which were to accompany that present, in which he introduces Cromwell himself. Cromwell corrected the two last, which are these:

*At tibi submittit frontem reverentior umbra,  
Non sunt hi vultus regibus usque truces.*

The bold sentiment expressed in those three couplets may be turned in this manner:

*Les armes à la main j'ai défendu les loix;  
D'un peuple audacieux j'ai vengé la querelle.  
Regardez sans frémir cette image fidèle;  
Mon front n'est pas toujours l'épouvante des rois.*

Behold the chief who fought for dying laws,  
And shun'd no dangers in his country's cause;  
To kings no longer dreadful, sues to you;  
And smooths the terrors of his awful brow.

This

This queen was the first who acknowledged him on his being made protector of the three kingdoms. Almost every sovereign in Europe sent ambassadors to their brother Cromwell, to this once menial servant of a bishop, who had put his sovereign, who was of their blood, to death by the hands of the executioner: nay, they disputed who should have the honour of being in alliance with him. Cardinal Mazarin, to please him, banished the two sons of Charles I. the two grandsons of Henry IV. the two cousins-germain of Lewis XIV. of France, conquered Dunkirk for him, and the keys of that place were accordingly sent him. When he died, Lewis XIV. with his whole court, put on mourning, except Mademoiselle, who had the courage to come to the circle in colours, thus singly maintaining the honour of her family.

Never was there king more absolute than Cromwell. He said, he liked better to govern under the quality of protector than that of king, because the power of the latter was well known to the people of England, whereas that of a protector was not. This shewed a thorough knowledge of mankind, who are slaves to opinion, which opinion often depends on a mere name. He had conceived a thorough contempt for religion, though he was indebted to it for all the power and honours he enjoyed. We have an undeniable anecdote of this preserved in the St. John family, which is a sufficient proof of the sovereign contempt Cromwell entertained for that instrument which had produced such wonderful effects in his hands. He was one day cracking a bottle with Ireton, Fleetwood,

Fleetwood, and St. John\*, who was grandfather to the present Lord Bolingbroke; they wanted to draw the cork of a bottle, when the corkscrew happened to fall under the table: they were all of them in search of it, but could not find it. In the mean time, word was brought in that a deputation from the Presbyterian churches waited for an audience in the antichamber. "Tell them," says Cromwell, "that I am *in private seeking the Lord*." This was the canting expression of those fanatics for being at prayers. When he had in this manner dismissed the deputation of ministers, he made use of these very words to his companions: "Those knaves think we are seeking the Lord, whereas in truth we are looking for the corkscrew."

Europe has no example of any man who raised himself to such an height of glory, from so humble an original. What could such a man want? Success. This success he enjoyed; but was he happy with all his good fortune? He lived in very narrow and uneasy circumstances till past forty; he then bathed himself in blood, passed the rest of his days in perpetual anxieties, and died at last in his seven and fiftieth year. Let any man but compare the life of this man with that of Newton, who lived fourscore and four years, in perfect tranquillity, full of honour, the light and guide of all intelligent beings, his reputation and fortune daily encreasing, without care or remorse; and

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\* The St. John here mentioned was no more than a natural son of Lord Bolingbroke's family, and a lawyer by profession.

then tell me whose was the happier lot of the two.

*O curas hominum, ô quantum est in rebus inane!*



## On FANATICISM.

GEOMETRY has not always the property of bestowing a just way of thinking on those who cultivate that science. Into what precipices may not one fall with those outlines of reason? A famous Protestant, who was reckoned one of the first mathematicians of his age, and who trod in the steps of Newton, Leibnitz, and Bernouilli, took it into his head, some years since, to draw some very odd corollaries. It has been said, that with one grain of faith one might remove mountains; this person, by an analysis wholly geometrical, says to himself, "I have many grains of faith, therefore I ought to do something more than remove mountains." This was he who made his appearance in London in 1707, accompanied with some learned persons, and even some of them very sensible men. He gave out publicly, that he would raise a dead person to life in any church-yard they should think proper. Their reasonings were always guided by synthesis. They argued thus: The true disciples must certainly work miracles, and we are true disciples; ergo, we can do any thing we please. Simple saints of the church of Rome, who were

were wholly ignorant of geometry, have raised a great number of dead; therefore, *a fortiori*, we who are the reformers of the reformed must certainly be able to raise whom we please.

It is impossible to answer such arguments; they are all according to the strictest rules of the schools. Here then is what has deluged antiquity with prodigies. Hence we may account for the temples of Esculapius being always full of votive tablets, and every pillar of it hung round with the crutches of the lame, and the pictures of cures performed, with the images of little children in silver, as big as the life; in short, every thing was miraculous.

In a word, our famous protestant geometrician that I am speaking of, was so much in earnest, that he positively assured the public he would raise the dead; and this plausible proposal made such an impression on the populace, that queen Anne was obliged to appoint a day, an hour, and a church-yard, in the option of the adept, where he might perform his miracle in a proper manner in the presence of the magistracy. Our geometrical apostle made choice of St. Paul's Cathedral to exhibit his holy art. The people lined the place, and soldiers were planted to keep the dead and the living in order. The magistrates took their seats; and the recorder wrote every circumstance of the transactions in the public archives. One cannot be too exact or use too many precautions where miracles are concerned. A body was therefore taken up in presence of the saint, such as he was pleased to direct. He prayed, fell on his knees, made a thousand holy contortions, in which he was followed by his companions—but in vain; the deceased

deceased gave not the smallest sign of life, so that they were forced to carry him back to his hole, and content themselves with some slight punishment of the raiser of the departed and his adherents. I have since seen one of those poor fellows; he owned to me that some one of them had been tainted with a little matter of venial sin, which the departed had discovered; and that, had it not been for this, the resurrection had most infallibly taken place.

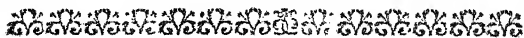
Were it lawful to blaze abroad aught to the discredit of those to whom the public owes the greatest and most sincere respect, I should now be tempted to say, that Newton, the great Newton himself, has discovered in the Revelations that the pope is antichrist, with abundance of the same sort of stuff: I verily think I should call him an Arian in good earnest. I am sensible this weakness of Newton is to that of our other geometrician as an unit is to an infinite number. There is certainly no kind of comparison. But what a wretched set of beings must the human species be, when such a man as the immortal Newton could persuade himself he saw the present history of Europe in the Apocalypse!

It would seem that superstition is an epidemical kind of disorder, and from which the brightest minds, and even freethinkers, are not wholly exempt. There are in Turkey persons of extreme good sense, who would suffer em-paling alive for certain opinions of *Aboubeker*. These principles once admitted to be just, their other arguments are certainly very conclusive. The Navaricians, the Radarists, and the Jaba-rists, damn each other mutually, by mere sub-tile and cobweb arguments: they all of them draw



very plausible consequences; though none of them have the courage to examine the principles on which those arguments are founded.

A report is spread abroad in the world, that there is a giant seventy feet high; immediately the doctors in a body examine what the colour of his hair ought to be, together with the dimensions of his thumb, and the breadth of his nails. There is nothing but outcries, caballing, and disputes. They who maintain that the little finger of the giant is no more than fifteen lines in diameter, condemn such as affirm the little finger to be a foot thick to the flames. "But, for heaven's sake, gentlemen, are you sure there is such a monster in being as this giant?" says a by-stander, with great modesty. "What a blasphemous doubt!" cry all the disputants, "what an impious absurdity!" Thus they come to a pious conclusion to stone this by-stander; and after having murdered him in the most orthodox and edifying manner imaginable, they fall together by the ears, according to custom, about the mystery of the nails and the little finger.



## On D E I S M.

**D**EISM is a religion which is diffused through all religions, a metal which mixes and unites with all other metals, and whose veins penetrate under ground to the extremities of the universe. This mine lies nearer the surface,

surface, and is more worked in China than in other parts; every where else it lies concealed, and is a secret wholly unknown to any but the true adepts.

There is no country where those adepts abound more than in England. In the last century there were even some atheists in that kingdom, as well as in France and Italy. What chancellor Bacon said has been fulfilled to a title, That a smattering of philosophy makes one an atheist, but that a profound application to it leads to the knowledge of a God. At the time that men believed with Epicurus, that chance governs every thing, or with Aristotle, and even with several ancient divines, that every thing owes its being to corruption, and that, with the help of a little matter and motion, the world went very well of itself, it was then possible for a man to have disbelieved a providence. But, after having a nearer view of nature, which the ancients never saw at all; after discovering that all matter is organized, and that every thing contains the principles of propagation; after a full conviction that a mushroom is as much the production of infinite wisdom as the system of the universe; thinking persons have fallen to adoring where their predecessors blasphemed. Natural philosophers are become the champions of a providence. A catechist announces a God to children, whilst a Newton is demonstrating its existence to the sages of the world.

Many have been desirous to know, whether deism, considered in itself, and without any religious ceremonies, can properly be called a religion. The answer is evident: He who only

acknowledges a creating God, he who considers God only as a being infinitely powerful, and who sees nothing in his creatures but machines of an admirable contrivance; can no more be said to have a right sense of religion towards him, than an European, who should admire the power of an emperor of China, would be, for that reason only, a subject of that prince: but he who is persuaded that God has been pleased to create a certain relation between himself and his creatures; that is, between himself and men, whom he has made free, capable of good and evil, and who hath bestowed on them all that faculty of right reason, which is properly the instinct of man, and on which is founded the law of nature; this person is certainly under the power of true religion, and a religion at least infinitely superior to all those of the sects who are not of our communion; for all those sects are in the wrong, whereas the law of nature is undoubtedly, so far as it goes, perfectly right: even our revealed religion neither is nor can be any other than right reason as yet unaided by revelation, whereas the other religions are only good sense perverted by superstition.

All the sects differ from one another, because they are of man; whereas morality is every-where the same, because it proceeds from God.

It has been asked, Why, of five or six hundred different sects, there has not been one that has not been the occasion of bloodshed? And that the Deists, who are so numerous in all parts, have never occasioned the smallest disturbance? The reason is, that they were philosophers. Now philosophers may, in all likelihood,

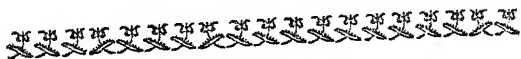
hood, be guilty of false reasoning, but never engage in intrigues of state; so that they who persecute philosophers, on pretence that their opinions may prove dangerous to the public, are full as absurd as a man would be who should imagine the study of algebra might possibly raise the price of corn at market. A thinking being, who is in an error, is an object of pity, and his persecutor a dangerous idiot and a madman. We are all sons of one parent; and should any of my brothers, who is full of filial respect, and animated with a charity truly fraternal, think proper to pay his respects to our Common Father after a different manner from me, am I therefore to cut his throat?

After all, what is a true Deist? One who says to God, "I adore and love thee;" one who says to a Turk, a Chinese, an Indian, and to a Russian, "I love thee."

But perhaps he doubts of Mahomet's voyage to the Moon, and accordingly makes bold to suppress one half of it, at least in his own private opinion; he does not insist his wife should leap into the fire on his death, out of pure devotion. Sometimes too he may be tempted to think the history of the eleven thousand virgins, and that of St. Amable, whose hat and gloves were carried to Rome by a sun-beam, a little dubious. In every other respect he may be a very honest man. Noah would certainly have admitted him into his ark; Numa Pompilius into his council; he would have rode on the car of Zoroaster, philosophized with Plato, Aristippus, Cicero, and Atticus; but

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tell me, do you think he would not have had a sip of the hemlock with Socrates?



### ON THE CONTRADICTIONS of this WORLD.

**T**HE more one knows this world of ours, the more contradictions and inconsistencies shall we find in it. To begin with the Grand Turk; he is under an indispensable necessity to cut off the head of every one who gives him the least grounds of displeasure, and is at the same time hardly able to preserve his own.

If from the Grand Turk we pass to St. Peter; his holiness confirms the election of emperors, has kings for his vassals, but is not more powerful than a duke of Savoy. He sends his commands into America and the East Indies; yet is he not able to take away one privilege from the republic of Lucca. The emperor is king of the Romans; but his whole right and prerogative consists in holding the pope's stirrup, and the basin for him to wash in at mass.

The English serve their monarch on the knee; but then they depose, imprison, and cut off his head on a scaffold.

Men who have made a vow of poverty, obtain, even by virtue of that vow, an estate of two hundred thousand crowns yearly revenue; and

and, in consequence of their humility, become absolute sovereigns.

At Rome they rigorously condemn pluralities of benefices, with cure of souls; while at the same instant they will issue out bulls to some German to enable him to hold half a dozen bishoprics at once. It is, say they, because the German bishops have no church cures. The chancellor of France is the second person in the state, and yet he is never permitted to eat at the king's table; at least, it has never happened hitherto: while a colonel, who is scarce a gentleman, enjoys that honour. An intendant's lady is a queen in her husband's province, and at court no more than a simple country madam.

They who are convicted of that heinous sin of non-conformity, are publicly burnt; whilst the second eclogue of Virgil, in which is that warm declaration of love, which Corydon makes the beauteous Alexis, *Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin*, is gravely expounded in every college; and they are even at abundance of pains to cause their pupils to take notice that tho' Corydon was fair and Amyntas swarthy, yet still Amyntas might justly claim the preference.

Should a poor harmless philosopher, who never dreamed of doing the least harm to any one, take it into his head to imagine that the earth moves, that light comes from the sun, or that matter might possibly have some other properties besides those we are yet acquainted with, immediately the hue-and-cry is raised against him as an impious disturber of the public tranquillity, notwithstanding his persecutors have translated and published, *in usum delphini*, Lu-

cretius and Cicero's Tusculane Questions, which are two complete bodies of irreligion.

Our courts of justice have now rejected all belief of persons possessed with evil spirits, and witches are subjects of laughter; but Gausfredy and Grandier were both burnt for witchcraft; and lately, by a majority of voices, a monk was condemned to the stake by one of our parliaments, for having bewitched a young damsel of eighteen years by breathing upon her\*.

The sceptical philosophy of Bayle was even persecuted in Holland. La Motte le Vayer, still a greater sceptic, though not near so good a philosopher, was preceptor to Lewis XIV. and his brother. Gourville was hanged in effigy at Paris, whilst he was the ambassador of France in Germany.

The famous atheist Spinoza lived and died in peace. Vanini, whose only crime was writing against Aristotle, was burnt for an atheist: in this quality he has had the honour to make a considerable article in the history of the republic of letters, as well as in all the dictionaries, those enormous archives of lies, with so small a mixture of truth: Do but open those books, you will there find it recorded that Vanini † not only

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\* This is the famous prosecution of Father Girard and Miss Cadere. Never was there any thing more disgraceful to humanity.

† Julius Cæsar Vanini, born in the kingdom of Naples in the sixteenth century, was an adventurer in freethinking, and travelled into several countries, where he brought himself into trouble by speaking and writing on the mysteries of religion. At length he was imprisoned at Tholouse, tried and convicted of atheism and sorcery, for which he was brought to the stake and burned alive, after his tongue had been cut out.

taught atheism in his writings, but also that twelve professors of the same creed had actually set out from Naples with design to make proselytes to their gospel in all parts; then open Vanini's books, you will be astonished to find they contain nothing but so many proofs of the existence of a deity. See here what he says in his *Amphitheatrum*, a work condemned upon trust, because it is wholly unknown: "God is his own sole principal and boundary, without end, without beginning, having no need of either; and the father of all beginning and of every end; he exists for ever, but in no space of time; with regard to time, there is no duration, *a parte ante*, that is to say, which is past, nor futurity which will come hereafter; he is present every where without occupying any place; immoveable, yet without stopping, and rapid without motion; he is all, but without one exclusive of all; he is in every thing, but without being confined; and without every thing, but without being excluded from other beings; good, without quality; a whole, without parts; and, whilst he produces all the various changes in nature, he is himself unvaried and immutable; his will is his power; he is simplicity itself; there is no such thing as mere possibility, all in him is real; he is the first, the middle, and the last act; in one word, he is all, yet is he above all kings, without them, within them, beyond them, eternally before them, yet present with them." After such a confession of his faith, was Vanini denounced an atheist. Yet what could the grounds for his condemnation be? The simple deposition of a fellow called Francon. In vain did his works bear witness in his



favour. A single enemy robbed him of his life and reputation, at least all over Europe, at the same time.

The little book, called the *Cymbalum Mundi*, which is no more than a cold imitation of Lucian, and which has not the slightest or most distant relation to Christianity, has in like manner been condemned to the flames; yet Rabelais has been printed *cum privilegio*, and the Turkish Spy, and even the Persian Letters\*, have been suffered to pass unmolested, particularly the latter, that ingenious, diverting, and daring performance, which contains an entire letter in defence of suicide; another in which are these words: "If we suppose such a thing as religion;" another where it is said in express terms, that the bishops have properly no other function, but that of dispensing with the laws; in a word, another which calls the pope a magician, who endeavours to persuade us that three and one are the same; that the bread we eat is not bread, &c. The abbe de St. Pierre, a man who might possibly be deceived, but who has constantly kept the public good in sight in all his writings, and whose works cardinal Du Bois used to call the Dreams of a good Citizen; this abbe de St. Pierre, I say, was excluded from the French Academy, *verum contradicente*, for having, in a political work, preferred the establishment of boards of council to the institution of secretaries of state; and for saying, that the finances had been shamefully managed towards the close of that glorious reign. The author of the Persian Letters made mention of Lewis XIV.

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\* By the Baron de Montesquieu.

only that he might have an opportunity to tell the world that the king was a magician, who undertook to persuade his subjects that paper was gold and silver; that he preferred the Turkish to all other forms of government; that he held a man who handed him a napkin in higher esteem than one who had won him battles; that he had given a pension to a person who had fled a matter of two leagues from the field of battle without once looking behind him, and a considerable government to one who had run four; that he was miserably poor, notwithstanding he says, in the same letter, that his finances are inexhaustible. Let us further see what the same author, in the only book of his then known, had said of Lewis XIV. the protector of the French Academy; and it is on the reputation he acquired by this book, he was admitted into their number. We may add to this, what crowns the inconsistency, that this company received him amongst them chiefly for making them ridiculous; for of all the books in which authors have made themselves merry at the expence of their company, there is none where they are worse handled than in the Persian Letters. Consult the letter in which it is said; "The members who compose this body, have no other employment but to prate everlastingly; and panegyric flows naturally out of that babbling of theirs, which is truly world without end," &c. After treating that body in this manner, they very complaisantly praised him for his address in drawing a strong likeness.

Were I disposed to examine the contrarieties to be met with in the republic of letters, I must

write the history of all the literati, and of all the wits who have ever had a being: in like manner, had I a mind to enter into the detail of all the inconsistencies to be found in human society, I should be obliged to write no less than a history of the whole human race. An inhabitant of Asia, who should travel into Europe, might take us all for Pagans. The very days of the week with us bear the names of Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, and Venus; the marriage of Cupid and Psyche are painted in a palace belonging to the pope; but especially should this Asiatic be at one of our operas, he could have no manner of doubt but it was a festival in honour of the Heathen Gods. Were he to inform himself more exactly in what regarded our manners, he would be under much greater astonishment: he would find a law subsisting in Spain, by which all foreigners are excluded from the smallest commerce, directly or indirectly, with their American settlements, whilst those very foreigners carry on, by means of Spanish factors, a trade to the amount of fifty millions *per annum*; so that Spain could never grow rich, were it not for the violation of that law, which is still in being, though perpetually trampled upon: he could see the government in another country encouraging an India company, though their theologians had declared their dividends criminal before God: he would have the right of judging their fellow-subjects, the command of their armies in time of war, with the quality of counsellors of state, bought with money: he would never be able to comprehend how it should be mentioned in the patents which entitle them to hold those places,

places, that they have been granted, without calling, fee, or reward, and purely on the score of merit, whilst the valuable consideration is attached to their letters of provision. Would not our Asiatic be surprised to see our players at the same instant payed by the sovereign and excommunicated by the clergy? He would ask why a lieutenant-general, who is only a *roturier*, or man of the common class, though he may have won battles, shall, in the estimation of the *taille*, be ranked with a peasant, whilst an *Echevin*, or city sheriff\*, shall be held as noble as the Montmorenci's? Why, during the time that all regular shows are prohibited in a week which is consecrated to edification, they allow of mountebanks, whose language is offensive to the least delicate ear? He would see almost all our laws in direct opposition to our customs; and were we to travel into Asia, we should find pretty near the same inconsistencies.

Men are every-where alike fools: they make laws after much such a manner as we repair breaches in walls. In one place the elder brothers have done all in their power to leave their younger mere beggars; in others they share all alike. At one time the church authorizes duels, at another she anathematizes them. The partizans and enemies of Aristotle have been excommunicated in their turn, so have the wearers of long and short hair. There has not in the known world any law been discovered that has been able to redress a very silly piece of folly, which is gaming. The laws of play are the

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\* This ridiculous custom has been at length abolished in 1751. The lieutenant-generals are now declared as noble as the *echevins*.

only ones which admit of neither exception, relaxation, imposition, nor variation. A fellow that has been a lackey, if he plays at *lanfquenet* with a king, and happens to win, is paid without the least hesitation: in every other respect, the law is a sword, with which the stronger cuts the weaker in pieces.

Yet the world subsists as if it were constituted in the wisest manner imaginable; irregularity is attached to our natures; our political world is much like our globe, tho' something hideous, it yet preserves itself. It would be folly to wish, that all the mountains, seas, and rivers, were drawn in regular geometrical figures: it would be a still higher piece of folly to require such a thing as consummate wisdom from men; it would be to give wings to dogs, or horns to eagles.

O N

# WHAT IS NOT DONE,

A N D

# WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

**T**O let the world go as it will, to do one's duty in a decent way, and to take care always to speak well of the prior, is an old maxim amongst the monks, but which would never draw the convent out of its ancient poverty, the neglect of its discipline, and the contempt that must of necessity ensue from such a conduct. When men are not spurred with emulation, they are properly so many asses who jog on slowly at the old pace, who stop at the smallest obstacle, and fall to eating their thistles with great composure, at sight of these obstacles which they try not to overcome; but on hearing the voice of some one who encourages them, on feeling the goad which rouses them, they become like coursers, whose flight o'erleaps all bounds. Had it not been for the salutary remonstrances of the abbé de St. Pierre, the barbarities proceeding from the arbitrary manner of levying the taille, would have never been abolished in France. Had it not been for the advice of Locke†, the general confusion

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† When the leading men in parliament resolved upon a new coinage, in consequence of the advice Sir Isaac Newton gave to Mr. Montague, afterwards earl of Halifax; a question arose whether the new coin, in its different

fusion of the coin in England had never been repaired : there are often found men, who, without buying the right of sitting in judgment on their peers, love the public good full as much as it is unheeded by those who purchase this power of doing good or evil, just as one buys a farm.

One day in the first ages of the Roman republic, a citizen, whose predominant passion was the desire of rendering his country as flourishing as possible, asked leave to speak with the presiding consul : he was told that the magistrate was at table in company with the pretor, the edile, some senators, their mistresses, and buffoons ; on which occasion he left in the hands of one of these saucy slaves that waited on them at table, a memorial nearly to the following purport : “ Since you see tyrants have every where done all the mischief in their power, why do not ye do all the good you are able ? Whence comes it that the poor beset your temples, and your streets, making a show of that misery of theirs, which is at once disgraceful to you, and disables them from serving their country, to which they might be serviceable were they employed in the public works ? What are those legions doing, who had better been set about repairing the highways and fortifications. That morass, were it drained, would no longer

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ferent denominations, should retain the original weight and purity of the old. Mr. Lowndes proposed, that the standard should be raised in value : he was opposed by Mr. Locke, at that time one of the commissioners of the board of trade, and his arguments were so convincing, that the committee resolved that the established standard should be preserved.

infest a whole province, and would become fertile fields. Those irregular streets fit only for a city of barbarians, might be turned into magnificent squares. Those heaps of marble, which cover all the banks of the river, might be cut into statues, and thus become the recompense of those great men who have served their country, as well as a public school of virtue, whereof they would be the monuments : your public markets ought not only to be commodious but magnificent, instead of filthy and loathsome places, as they now are : your houses are without water, and your public fountains are void of all taste or beauty : your chief temple is a piece of barbarous architecture : the entrance of your public theatres resemble those of brothels : those halls where the people assemble to hear what ought to be the wonder of the universe, have neither neatness, proportion, grandeur, nor convenience. The palace of your capitol threatens ruin ; the front of it is hid by vile cabins, whilst the house of Moletus occupies its very center. In vain will your criminal lethargy reply, that the cost of remedying so many absurdities would be too extravagant : let me ask you, will you bestow those sums on the Cimbri and Massagetes ? Would it not be bestowed on your architects, your sculptors, your painters, and so many other artists ? These artists thus rewarded will restore this money to the state, by a new encrease in their necessary expences, which they will be enabled to make. The fine arts will be honoured, and will at once bestow glory and wealth on those who have protected them, for the richest is always the most industrious people. Listen then to so noble an

emu-



emulation; nor let the Greeks, who begin to esteem your wisdom and valour, any longer reproach you with your barbarity."

The memorial of the citizen was read at table; the consul said not a word on the subject, but called for a glass of wine; the edile observed, the memorial was not amiss, and so the affair ended. The conversation turned on the flavour of the Falernian wine, on the sparkling quality of that of Cecuba, the praises of a celebrated cook, the newly discovered sauce for surgeon, healths went round, three or four insipid stories were told, after which the company fell asleep. In the mean time, the senator Appius, who had been secretly stung by the reading of this memorial, built some time after the Appian way; Flaminius constructed the way called the Flaminian; a third beautified the capitol; a fourth builds an amphitheatre; and a fifth several public markets. Thus the advice of our obscure citizen was a plant which took root by degrees in the minds of those great men.



## ON JOHN LAW, MELON, and DUTOT.

### ON COMMERCE and LUXURY.

COMMERCE has been better understood in France within these twenty years, than it had ever before been from the reign of Pharamond to that of Lewis XIV. Before this period it was a secret art, a kind of chymistry in the hands of  
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three or four persons, who actually made gold, but without communicating the secret by which they had been enriched. The body of the nation were in such profound ignorance of this important secret, that we had neither minister nor magistrate that knew what the words *annuities*, *principal*, *exchange*, or *dividend* meant. It was designed, that a Scotchman called John Law should come into France, and overturn the whole economy of our government to instruct us. He had the courage, in the most horrible confusion of our finances, and in the time of a most dreadful famine, to establish a bank and an India company. This was giving a vomit to the sick; we took too much, and convulsions were the consequence: but at length, from the ruins of his system, we had left us an India company, with a capital amounting to the sum of fifty millions of livres. What had been the case had we taken a moderate dose of that salutary medicine? In my opinion, the state had certainly been the most vigorous and powerful in the whole world.

There prevailed still among us, at the time when the present India company was established, a prejudice so very strong, that the Sorbonne declared the sharing the dividends of actions usurious. In the very same manner the German printers, who came to establish their art in France, were in 1570 accused of witchcraft.

We Frenchmen, there is no denying it, have come very late into every thing. Our first steps in the arts have been to thwart the introduction of those truths which came to us from abroad: we defended theses against the circulation of the blood, after it had been demonstrated in England;

land; against the revolution of the earth, which had been made evident in Germany; not even the most salutary remedies have escaped being proscribed by an arret. To discover any new truths, to propose any thing of general use to mankind, is a sure step to persecution. John Law, that Scotchman to whom we owe our India company, and all we know of commerce, was driven out of France, and died in misery at Venice; and yet, notwithstanding we had scarce three hundred merchant ships of any burden when he proposed his system\*, we have now upwards of eighteen hundred. Though we owe them all to him, we are yet exceedingly ungrateful to the memory of our benefactor.

The principles of commerce are known at present to all the world: we are beginning to have good books on that subject. The essay *Sur le Commerce* of Melon, is the work of a man of sense, a good citizen, and an excellent philosopher: it has a tincture of the spirit of that age; and I don't think that even in the time of M. Colbert, there were two persons in France capable to compose such a work. There are, notwithstanding, a number of errors in that excellent book; so great a progress as he has made in the road to truth was no easy matter: it is a piece of service done the public to point out the mistakes that happen in an useful book. It is indeed in such only we ought to look for them. It is shewing respect to a good work to contradict it; a bad piece does not deserve that honour.

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\* This was written in 1738.

The following observations are such as seem contrary to truth.

I. He says those countries in which are the greatest number of beggars, are the most barbarous. I believe there is no city more civilized than Paris, and where at the same time there are more beggars. This is a vermin that attach themselves to riches; the drones run from the extremities of the kingdom to Paris, in order to lay opulence and good-nature under contribution. This is an abuse difficult to root out, but which proves only that there are wretches in such a country, who prefer begging to getting their livelihood by their honest industry. This may be a proof of wealth and negligence, but by no means of barbarity.

II. He repeats in several places that Spain would be more powerful without America. He grounds his observations on the depopulation of Spain, and on the weakness under which that state hath long languished. This notion of America weakening Spain is to be met with in a hundred different authors. But had they given themselves the trouble to reflect that the treasures of America were the cement of the power of Charles V. and that by their means Philip II. would have been master of Europe, if Henry the Great, Elizabeth, and the princes of Orange, had not been heroes, those authors would have been of a different way of thinking. It has been imagined that the Spanish monarchy has been in a manner annihilated, because their kings Philip III. Philip IV. and Charles II. were either unfortunate or weak princes. But let us see how this monarchy has resumed new life under cardinal Alberoni; let us cast our eyes to-  
wards

wards Africa and Italy, those theatres of the conquests of the present Spanish government, and we shall be forced to own that nations are just what kings and ministers make them. Courage, fortitude, industry, every talent remains buried, till some great genius appears, who rouses and sets them in motion. The capitol is at present inhabited by Recollets, and chaplets are now distributed on the spot where vanquished kings followed the chariot of Paulus Emilius. Let but an emperor take up his residence in Rome, and let this emperor be a Julius Cæsar, every Roman will become a Cæsar with him.

As to the depopulation of Spain, it is not near so great as what it is given out to be : and even after all, this kingdom, and the states of America depending on it, are at this time so many provinces of the same empire, which is separated by no longer a space than what may be sailed over in two months. In a word, their treasures become ours, by a necessary and unavoidable circulation. Their cochineal, their quinquina, their mines of Mexico and Peru, are ours, and by the same means our manufactures are Spanish. Had America been a burden to them, is it to be thought they would have persisted so long in denying admittance into that country to strangers of every denomination ? Do people preserve with so much care the principle and source of one's ruin, after having had two hundred years to consider of it ?

III. He says, that the loss of their soldiers is not the most fatal consequence in their wars ; that an hundred thousand men are a very small number in comparison to twenty millions ; but that

that a new augmentation of taxes renders twenty millions of persons miserable. I will grant him twenty millions of souls in France; but I will not likewise grant him, that it is better to have an hundred thousand soldiers cut to pieces, than to put the rest of the nation to an additional expence in taxes. This is not all; here is a strange and fatal miscalculation. Lewis XIV. had, reckoning the whole body of the marine, four hundred and forty thousand men in pay during the war in 1701. The Roman empire never had such a numerous army on foot. It has been observed, that about one fifth part of an army is destroyed by the end of a campaign, by diseases, accidents, fire, and sword. Here then are eighty-eight thousand men destroyed each year; therefore, at the expiration of ten years, the state has lost eight hundred and fourscore thousand men, and together with them all the children they would have procreated in that time. At present, if France contains about eighteen millions of souls, take away one half nearly for the women, together with all the old men, the children, the clergy, the monks, the magistrates, and those who are necessary to carry on manufactures, and to till the ground, what number remains for the defence of the nation? In eighteen millions you will hardly find eighteen hundred thousand men, and the war in ten years is supposed to have destroyed near nine hundred thousand. Thus the war destroys to a nation one half of all her men capable of bearing arms in her defence; and you say a new impost is more disastrous to a nation than the death of so many of her best people.

After correcting these inadvertencies, which the author would have corrected himself, suffer me to have the pleasure to consider what he has advanced on freedom of commerce, on manufactures, on exchange, and chiefly with regard to luxury. This wise apology for luxury is by so much the more estimable in this author, and has so much the more force from his mouth, as his life was that of a philosopher.

What then is luxury? 'Tis a word without any precise idea \*, much such another expression as when we say the eastern and western hemisphere: in fact, there is no such thing as East and West; there is no fixed point where the earth rises and sets; or if you will, every point on it is at the same time East and West. It is the same with regard to luxury; for either there is no such thing, or else it is in all places alike. Lead us back to those times when our grandfathers wore no shirts. Had any one told them, you must wear finer and lighter stuffs than the finest cloth, white as snow, and you shall shift them every day; and even after they are a little dirty, you must, with a composition prepared with great art, restore them to their former lustre; every body would cry out, What luxury! What effeminacy! Such a magnificence as this is hardly sufferable in a king. You want to corrupt our manners, and ruin the na-

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\* There is no occasion to define luxury, it is so well understood; and notwithstanding all that has been said in defence of it, by different writers, it must be owned, that whatever tends to impair the health, and corrupt the morals of the people, is, on the whole, pernicious to the community. That luxury does both, no-body will deny.

tion. Do they understand by luxury, the expence of an opulent person? Must he then live like the poor, he whose profusion alone is sufficient to maintain the poor? Expensiveness should be the thermometer of a private person's fortune, as general luxury is the infallible mark of a powerful and flourishing empire. It was under Charlemagne, Francis I. and under the ministry of the great Colbert, and the present administration, that men lived at the greatest expence; that is to say, that the arts were encouraged and cultivated.

What would the tart, the satyrical la Bruyère be at? What means this affected misanthrope, by crying out, "Our ancestors knew not what it was to prefer taste to utility; they were never known to light themselves with waxen tapers; this was a commodity reserved for the altar, and the royal palace. They were never heard to say, Let my horses be put to my coach: good pewter shone on their tables and side-boards; their silver was laid up in their coffers, &c." Is not this a very pleasant eulogium of our forefathers, to say they neither had taste, industry, neatness, nor plenty? Their silver was laid up in their coffers. Were this really true, it was certainly the greatest folly imaginable. Money is made for circulation, to bring the secrets of art to light, and to purchase the industry and labours of men: he who hoards it is a bad citizen, and even a bad economist. It is by dissipating it we render ourselves useful to our country and to ourselves. Will men never grow weary of commending the follies of antiquity, with a view to ridicule the advantages of our own times?



This work of Melon has produced another by Mr. Dutot, which has much the preference, both in point of depth and justness of reasoning. This piece of Mr. Dutot is likely to give birth to another, which will probably carry the palm from both the others, as it is the production of a statesman. Never was the study of the *Belles-lettres* so closely connected with that of the revenues, which is an additional merit in the age in which we live.



## ON MONEY and the REVENUES of Kings.

IT is well known that every change in the money in the last reign was both burdensome to the people, and hurtful to the interest of the king. In these, therefore, is there no case in which an augmentation of the money may become necessary?

In a state, for instance, that has but a small share of commerce, and as small a share of money (which has long been the case with France) a lord shall possess an estate of an hundred marks a year: he is forced to borrow, in order to marry his daughters, or to carry on a war, a thousand marks, for which he is to pay fifty marks *per annum*. By this means his family is reduced to the annual expence of fifty marks, for all charges. In the mean time the nation becomes more industrious, carries on a trade, so that money becomes more plenty. Then, as it never fails to happen, labour becomes dearer, so that the expence of luxuries, agreeable to the

rank of this family, becomes double, treble, and even quadruple; whilst the corn, which is the sole resource of the country, does not increase in the same proportion, because people eat no greater quantity of bread than heretofore, though a great deal more is consumed in magnificence. What was formerly bought with fifty marks, shall now cost two hundred; so that the owner of land, who is now obliged to pay fifty marks of annuity, is obliged to dispose of his estate. What I now say of the lord, I say equally of the magistrate, the man of letters, &c. as of the labourer, who buys his pewter dishes, his silver cup, his bed, and his linen, so much the dearer. In a word, the highest personage in the land is in the same case, when his revenues are no more than certain fixed demesnes, together with certain imposts, which he is afraid to augment, for fear of exciting murmurs among his people. In this pressing situation, there is certainly no more than the choice of one expedient left, which is to ease the debtor. This may be done by abolishing his debts: this is the custom practised by the Egyptians, with several other oriental nations, at the expiration of every fifty, and sometimes every thirty years\*. This custom was far from being so rigid as is imagined, the creditors having taken their measures accordingly, and a loss which was discernable so long beforehand, can hardly be called a loss. Although this law is not in force with us, it was however found necessary to have recourse to it in effect,

\* At the end of every seven years the legislature of England interposes for the relief of insolvent debtors; a much better expedient than that of raising the value of the coin.

whatever round-about methods were used to avoid it. For what is it, when one falls on a method to pay only the fourth part of what he owes, but a kind of jubilee? This was very easily discovered, by giving coins an arbitrary value, and saying, this piece of gold, which was in value six livres, shall, from this day forward, be valued at four and twenty; and whoever should owe four such pieces of gold, under the title of six livres each, would pay his debt by paying only one single piece of gold, which would be called four and twenty livres. As these operations were performed by insensible degrees, no body was startled at the change. One, who was both debtor and creditor, gained on one hand what he lost on the other. Another carried on trade; and a third was sufferer, and was obliged to retrench.

In this manner have all the nations of Europe proceeded, before they had a regular and an extensive commerce. Let us examine the conduct of the Romans, we shall find that the *As*, the pound of copper of twelve ounces, was reduced to six liards of our present money. Amongst the English, the pound sterling of sixteen ounces of silver, is reduced to two and twenty livres of our money. The pound gros among the Dutch is worth about twelve livres in accompts. But our livre is what has undergone the greatest change of them all.

In the time of Charlemagne we called the current coin equal in value to the twentieth part of a livre, a *solide*, from the Roman name of *solidum*: this *solide* is what we now call a *sous*, in the same manner as we barbarously pronounce the month of August, *Août*, which we very politely

lately pronounce *Ou*; so that in our so exceeding polite language, *hodieque manent vestigia ruris*. In short, this *solide*, or *sous*, which was the twentieth part of a livre, and the tenth part of a mark of silver, is at this day no more than a penny piece of copper money, representing the nineteen hundred and twentieth part of a livre, silver being supposed at forty-nine livres the mark. This calculation is almost incredible; and it is found by this very calculation, that a family which formerly should have had an hundred *solides* yearly rent, and who could have lived extremely well, would now have no more than five-sixths of a crown of six livres to spend yearly.

What does all this prove? Why this; that of all nations we have always been the most given to change, though by no means the happiest; that we have pushed the abuse of a law of nature, which requires the easing of debtors oppressed by the diminution of the value of money, to an enormous and most intolerable excess. Now, since Mr. Dutot has so well exposed the dangers of those sudden shocks which the change of the summary value of the coin occasions, it is to be hoped that, in an age so enlightened as ours, we run no risk of undergoing the like disasters.

What most surprised me in Mr. Dutot's work, was to find him asserting that Lewis XII. Francis I. Henry II. and Henry III. were richer than Lewis XV. Who could have thought that Henry III. at the present rate of computation, should have had one hundred and sixty-three millions more revenue than our present king? I confess

I have not yet been able to surmount my surprize. For how should Henry III. if he was actually possessed of such immense wealth, have found so much difficulty in opposing the Spaniards? How came he to be so oppressed by the Guises? How came France to lose her arts and manufactures? Whence is it, that no fine houses were built, no royal palace erected, no taste, nor the least symptom of magnificence were then to be seen, those never failing attendants of riches? Whereas at present three hundred fortresses always in thorough repair, which strengthen and adorn our frontiers, and which are garrisoned with at least two hundred thousand men, are a certain proof of the superiority of our wealth. The troops which compose the king's household, may well enough be compared to the ten thousand, covered with gold and silver, which attended on the chariot of Xerxes and Darius. Paris contains twice the number of people, and is an hundred times more opulent than under Henry III. Commerce, which, if we had then any at all, was in a most languishing and prostrate condition, now flourishes at a great rate, to the vast emolument of the nation.

Since the last melting down of the coin, it has been found that upwards of twelve hundred millions in gold and silver passed through the mint. It is found, by the sum of the stamp-duty on those metals, that there is in France about an equal quantity of bullion in wrought plate. It is true, those immense riches cannot be said to lessen the misery of the people in a year of dearth. But this is not the subject of our present enquiry : the question is, to know by what means,

means, though the nation has become incomparably richer than in the preceding ages, the king has yet become actually poorer.

Let us first of all compare the riches of Lewis XV. with those of Francis I. The public revenues then amounted to sixteen millions of nominal livres, which livre was to the present as one is to four and a half. Therefore sixteen millions of such livres were equal in value to seventy-two millions of our livres: whence it follows, that with seventy-two millions only we should be as rich as at that period. But the revenues of the state\* are supposed to amount to two hundred millions: therefore Lewis XV. is richer by one hundred and twenty eight millions than Francis I. therefore too this prince is three times richer than Francis I. and by consequence draw three times the money from his people which Francis I. was able to do. This is very different from the calculation of M. Dutot.

He pretends, in order to prove his system, that commodities are fifteen times dearer than in the sixteenth century. Let us examine the price of commodities: we shall confine ourselves to the price of corn at the capital, one year with another. I find many years in the sixteenth century, in which corn was at fifty, five and twenty, twenty, and at eighteen sous, and even at four livres, from whence I estimate the mean value at thirty sous. Wheat is now worth twelve

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\* This is the supposition of M. Dutot. But in 1750, the king's revenues amounted to near three hundred millions †, at forty-nine livres ten sous the mark.

† Between fourteen and fifteen millions sterling. This calculation is higher than has been generally supposed, by five millions at least.

livres: therefore commodities have encreased in the proportion of eight times their ancient value, which is the same proportion with that of the encrease of their value in England and Germany. But those thirty sous, of the sixteenth century, were worth five livres fifteen sous of our present money. Now five livres fifteen sous make, excepting only five sous, one half of twelve livres: wherefore Lewis XV. actually is three times richer than Francis I. as he pays no more than twice the sum for commodities that was paid then †. Now a person who has nine hundred livres, and who buys a commodity for six hundred livres, will certainly remain richer by an hundred crowns, than he who, being possessed of three hundred livres, buys the same commodity for three hundred livres: therefore Lewis XV. remains richer by one third.

But this is not all: instead of buying every thing at double the price, he purchases soldiers, the most necessary commodity of kings, at a much cheaper rate than any of his predecessors. Under Francis I. and Henry II. the strength of our armies consisted in a national gendarmerie, and in foreign infantry, that cannot be compared in any respect to our present troops. But the infantry under Lewis XV. is paid nearly on the the same footing, that is, at the same price of numerary livres, as under Henry IV. The soldier sells his life and liberty at the rate of six sous a day, including his cloathing: these six

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† But we must take in every other species of provision, as well as corn, into the account, because many provinces formerly subsisted almost intirely without bread; upon milk, butter, cheese, eggs, fish, fowl, butcher's meat, and venison.

sous are equal to twelve in the time of Henry IV. so that with the same revenue with Henry the Great, we are able to maintain double the number of troops; and with double that sum, we can maintain four times that number. What I have said in this place suffices to shew, that, notwithstanding all the calculations of M. Dutot, our kings, as well as the state, are richer than formerly. I will not however deny, that both are much deeper in debt.

Lewis XIV. left at his death upwards of twice ten hundred millions of debt, at thirty livres the mark, because he would have, at the same time, five hundred thousand men in arms, two hundred ships of war, and build Versailles; and because, in the war on account of the Spanish succession, his arms were long unprosperous; but the resources of France by much exceed her debts. A state which is indebted only to itself can never be impoverished, and even debts are a new spur to industry.



## ON PRINTED LIES.

**W**E may at present divide the inhabitants of Europe into authors and readers, as they were for seven or eight ages divided into a set of barbarous tyrants with hawks on their fists, and slaves who were destitute of every necessary of life.

It is now about two hundred and fifty years since men, by degrees, began to conceive some notion they had such a thing as a mind : now every person reads, either to cultivate or adorn his mind, or, at the least, that he may be able to boast of his reading. As soon as the Dutch perceived this new want of the species, they became the factors of the commodity called Thought, as they had formerly been for our wines and salt : so that a bookseller of Amsterdam, that could not read, gained a fortune of a million by the labours of a few Frenchmen, that took it into their heads to become authors. These merchants informed themselves, by their correspondents, of the most marketable commodities ; and according to the wants of the public, set their workmen to the writing histories or romances ; but chiefly the former, because, after all, we cannot help believing there may be some small matter of truth in every thing that wears the title of a New History, Historical Memoirs, and Anecdotes, more than could well be expected from what passes under the denomination of a Romance. In this manner did the journeymen and labourers of those dealers in paper and ink compose the *Memoires d'Artagnan, de Pontis, de Vor-*

Vordac, de Rochefort, with so many others, in which we find a very circumstantial account of all the secret thoughts of kings and prime ministers, together with a hundred thousand public transactions that were never heard of before. Your young German barons, your Polish palatines, your dames of Stockholm and Copenhagen, read those books, and believe they are thereby informed of the most hidden secrets of the court of France.

Varillas was infinitely superior to the noble authors I am speaking of, though he frequently takes very unwarrantable liberties. He said, one day, to one who saw him somewhat puzzled, "I have three sovereigns, whom I must engage in conversation together: now none of the three ever saw one another; and I cannot tell, for the soul of me, how to contrive to bring it to pass." "So then, says the other, I suppose you must be writing some tragedy?"

Every one has not been blessed with invention: therefore it is, that we find the fables of antiquity, which were formerly printed in *folio*, reprinted a second time in *duodecimo*. I fancy one might discover, in upwards of two hundred authors, the same prodigies, and the same predictions, that were made in the time when astrology passed for a science. We shall possibly be told again, how two Jews, whose only talents were felling of old cloaths, and clipping of old coins, promised the empire to Leo the Isaurian, and demanded of him, that he would throw down the images of the Christians as soon as he should be seated on the imperial throne; as if Jews cared much whether we had any images or no. I do not despair to see it printed a second

time how Mahomet II. surnamed the Great, the most enlightened prince of his time, and the most magnificent encourager of the arts, spread fire and sword through Constantinople (which, by the bye, he preserved from pillage), demolished all the churches (of which he actually preserved above one half), caused the patriarch to be impaled; he who paid more honour to the patriarch than had ever been shewn him by the Greek emperors; had the bellies of four pages ripped up, that he might discover which of them it was that had eaten a melon; and, lastly, cut off his mistress's head to please the Janissaries. These histories, worthy only of Jack the Giant-killer, and of Blue-beard, are sold every day with approbation and privilege.

Some wiser heads have bethought themselves of another art of lying. They have made themselves heirs to all the great ministers, and have got possession of all their testaments. We have seen the testaments of Colbert and de Louvois published as authentic pieces by refined politicians, who never once crossed the threshold of the offices of the secretary at war, or of the treasury, in their lives. The testament of cardinal Richelieu, written by a hand rather better than the rest of them, has had a better fate, and the imposture passed well enough for a considerable time. It is really pleasant to see, in collections of harangues, what eulogiums have been lavished on the admirable testament of that incomparable cardinal. In this piece we find his great depth of genius; and a simpleton who had read it with a great deal of care, and had made a number of extracts from it, thought himself fit to govern the universe. The public has been as much im-  
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posed upon by the Testament of Charles V. duke of Lorraine: in this they discovered the vast penetration and the very spirit of that prince; though they who were in the secret, very plainly discovered the spirit of M. de Chevreumont, who wrote it.

After these testament-writers came the authors of anecdotes. We have a small history, printed in 1700, written by one mademoiselle Durand, a person well acquainted with the facts she related, under the title of "The History of the Amours of Gregory VII. Cardinal Richlieu, the Princess of Condé, and the Marchioness d'Urfé." I have read, some years since, the Amours of the Rev. Father la Chaise, confessor to Lewis XIV.

A lady of great honour †, a refugee at the Hague, composed, in the beginning of the present century, six large volumes of Letters, between a lady of quality in the country, and a lady of quality in Paris, informing one another, very familiarly, of the news of the times. Now, in these news of the times, I will venture to say there is not one piece of true intelligence. All the pretended adventures of the Chevalier de Bouillon, since known under the name of the Prince of Auvergne, are here related with all their circumstances. I had one day the curiosity to ask the chevalier, whether there was any foundation for what Mrs. Du Noyer had placed to his account. He assured me, on his honour, the whole was nothing but a collection of falsehoods. This lady had gathered together all the silly sto-

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† Mrs. Du Noyer,

ries current among the populace, which, in foreign parts, passed for the history of the court.

Sometimes the authors of such histories do more mischief than they think for. A few years ago a person of my acquaintance, not knowing how to employ his time, printed a little book, in which he gave out that a certain celebrated personage had lately perished by a most horrible assassination. I myself was an evidence of the contrary: I represented to the author how, by all laws divine and human, he was under an obligation to retract this falsehood, which he accordingly promised he would: yet the effect of his piece still remains, and I have seen this calumny repeated in some of the pretended histories of the age.

There has lately appeared a political work at London, the city, of all the cities in the universe, where the falsest news are published, with the falsest reasonings upon those falsities. "Every body knows," says the author, (p. 17) that the emperor Charles VI. died of poison given him in *aqua tuffana*: we know his favourite page was a Spaniard, to whom he left a legacy by his will, and who gave him the poison. The magistrates of Milan, who took the deposition of this page a little before his death, and sent it to Vienna, might tell us, if they pleased, who his instigators and accomplices were; and I could be glad the court of Vienna would, as soon as possible, inform the public of the circumstances of this horrible crime." I fancy the court of Vienna will cause them to wait a long while for the information they want, in regard to this chimera.

These calumnies, which are perpetually renewing, often put me in mind of the following verses:

*Les oisifs courtisans, que leurs chagrins dévorent,  
S'efforcent d'obscurir les astres qu'ils adorent ;  
Si l'on croit de leurs yeux le regard pénétrant,  
Tout ministre est un traître, Et tout prince un tyran ;  
L'hymen n'est entouré que de feux adultères ;  
Le frère à ses rivaux est vendu par ses frères ;  
Et si-tôt qu'un grand roi panche vers son déclin,  
Ou son fils ou sa femme ont bâté son destin. . .  
Qui croit toujours le crime en paraît trop capable.*

The courtly fry, from disappointment sore,  
With slander blacken what they should adore.  
Trust their remarks, they'll prove it clear as day,  
All kings oppress, all ministers betray.  
Adult'rous fires surround the marriage-bed ;  
The brother's blood the brother's hand hath shed ;  
Should some great monarch touch the goal of life,  
His fate is hasten'd by his son or wife.  
Of guilt that man too capable appears,  
Who credits thus each horrid tale he hears.

In this manner have the pretended histories of the age generally been written.

The war of 1702, and that of 1741, have produced as many lies in books, as they killed soldiers in their campaigns : they have told a hundred times over, and they tell it still, that the ministry of Versailles forged the testament of Charles II. king of Spain. Some anecdotes tell us, that the last marechal de la Feuillade failed in the attempt on Turin, and sacrificed his reputation, his fortune, and his army, purposely, and by a capital stroke of politics. Others of them assure us, that a certain minister was the cause of the loss of a battle, by a like stroke of politics. They have lately reprinted in the

the Transactions of Europe, that at the battle of Fontenoy we loaded our cannon with pieces of glass and poisoned shot; that general Campbell was killed by one of those poisoned bullets; upon which the duke of Cumberland sent the king of France a box, in which were contained the glass and metals extracted from his wound; that in this box was inclosed a letter, in which he tells the king, that the most barbarous nations had never made use of such weapons, and that the king was highly displeased on reading this letter. There is not the least shadow of truth or probability in this account. To these absurd lies they add, that we murdered the wounded English that remained on the field of battle in cold blood; though it stands proved, by the registers of our hospitals, that we took the same care of them as of our own soldiers.

How numerous are the secret memoirs, histories, of campaigns, and journals of all kinds! the prefaces to which promise the utmost impartiality, and the most exact information. If you visit one of these great politicians, you will find a poor scribe in a banian and night-cap, without fire or furniture, compiling or cobbling of news-papers. Sometimes these gentlemen will take a power under their protection. The story of one of these writers is well known, who had a reward of the emperor Leopold, at the close of the last war, for having kept him an army of fifty thousand men on the Lower Rhine for five years running. They will also sometimes declare war, and commit acts of hostility; though they run the risk of being treated as enemies. One of them, called Dubourg, who kept his office in Frankfort, was unluckily arrested there by an officer

officer of our army in 1748, and conducted to Mount St. Michael in a cage: and yet this example is far from cooling the courage of his magnanimous brethren.

One of the most noble and most common tricks of this kind, is that of those writers who transform themselves into ministers of state, and lords belonging to the court in the country they speak of. We have been favoured with a voluminous history of Lewis XIV. compiled from the memoirs of a minister of state. This minister was a Jesuit, who had been expelled his order, and had taken sanctuary in Holland, under the name of de la Stode, and who afterwards thought proper to create himself secretary of state for France in Holland for bread.

As it is always fitting to imitate good models, and as my lord chancellor Clarendon and the cardinal de Retz have drawn portraits of the principal personages they treat of, we ought by no means to wonder that the writers of our own times should, on hiring themselves to a bookseller, begin with very long and faithful portraits of the princes of Europe, and even the ministers and generals, though they have never so much as seen a lacquey who wore their livery. An English author, in the Annals of Europe, printed and reprinted, assures us, that Lewis XV. has nothing of that grandeur in his air and gait which speaks the king. This person must undoubtedly be very difficult and nice, with regard to physiognomies. But, to make amends, he tells us, that cardinal Fleury had an air of noble confidence. He is full as exact in regard to characters and facts as he is to persons: he informs Europe, that cardinal Fleury gave



gave up his title of prime minister (which he never had) in favour of the count de Thoulouse. He acquaints us, the army of marechal Maillebois was sent into Bohemia, only because a young lady of the court had left a letter on the table, which letter gave information of the situation of affairs: he says the count d'Argenson succeeded as minister at war, in the room of M. Amelot. I fancy, if one were willing to make a collection of all the books written in this manner, in order to become a little acquainted with the anecdotes of Europe, one might make an immense library, without ten pages of truth in the whole collection.

Another considerable article in this trade of printed paper is in these books called polemical, by way of excellence; that is to say, those in which one slanders his neighbours to get money. I do not speak of the functions of advocates, who enjoy the noble privilege of bespattering the adverse party at pleasure, and defaming families according to statute. I speak of those who in England, for example, excited by an ardent love of their country, write Philippics, worthy of Demosthenes, against the minister, in their garrets. These pieces are sold for two pence a sheet: sometimes they will print you four thousand copies, which is enough to keep one of those eloquent citizens alive for a month or two. I have heard Sir Robert Walpole say, that one day one of these Demosthenes's, who sell their works at two pence a sheet, having as yet declared himself of no party in the parliamentary dissensions, came to make him an offer of his pen to knock down all his enemies. The minister very civilly thanked him for his kind offer, and excused himself.

self from accepting his service. "You will not be offended then, answered the writer, if I make your antagonist Mr. Pulteney a tender of my assistance?" So away he hies to him, and he met with much such another reception. He declared openly against both; so that on Monday he wrote against Mr. Walpole, and on the Wednesday against Mr. Pulteney. But after getting a very honourable subsistence by it for a matter of two months, he concluded with asking charity at their doors.

The celebrated Pope was in his time treated exactly like a minister: his reputation made many men of letters imagine something might be got by him. For the honour of learning, and in order to advance the progress of the human mind, they printed against him above an hundred libels, in which they proved him to be an atheist; and, what is yet worse in England, they reproached him with being a catholic. They affirmed, on his publishing his translation of Homer, that he did not understand Greek, because he was crooked and had an ill smell. It is true he was crooked; but this was no reason why he might not be a very good Greek scholar, and his translation of Homer a very noble one. They impeached his morals, his education, his birth; they attacked his father and mother. These libels had no end. Pope had sometimes the weakness to answer them, which thickened the cloud of libels. At length he determined to be at the trouble to print a small \*compendium of all those excellent pieces.

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\* We suppose M. de Voltaire alludes to the *Dunciad*, which, instead of being *un petit abrégé*, is a most excellent poem.

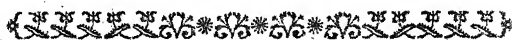
This was a mortal blow to these writers, who till then had lived very decently on the flanders they vented against him: they were now no longer read, and were silenced by the abridgement. They never recovered this stroke after.

I was strongly tempted to grow vain, on finding that our great writers dealt with me in the same manner as those gentry had used Pope. I may safely say, I have been of some little service to more than one author. I had, I forget how, done some little service to the illustrious abbé de Fontaines. But as this service was not sufficient to maintain him, the first thing he thought of, in order to get rid of his difficulties, on coming out of the jail from whence I delivered him, was the publishing a dozen libels against me, which, in truth, he composed wholly out of his regard for the honour of letters, and from the overflowing of his zeal for good taste. He printed an edition of the *Henriade*, in which he had inserted some verses of his own composing, and then criticised those very verses he had made himself. I have carefully preserved a letter wrote me upon a time by an author of this stamp: "Sir, I have printed a libel against you: there are four hundred copies in the impression; now, if you will send me four hundred livres, I will send you every copy of the work, upon my honour." I wrote him in answer, that I should be very far from abusing his goodness; that this would by no means be an advantageous bargain for him; and that the sale of his work must certainly be of much more service to him. I had no cause to repent of my generosity.

It is a good-natured action to encourage men of letters who are unknown, and who know not what subject to begin with. One of the greatest pieces of charity that can be done them, is to give the public a tragedy. The moment you do this, all of a sudden come out "Letters to Ladies of Quality, an impartial Criticism of the new Play, a Letter from a Friend in Town to his Friend in the Country, a serious and mature Examination, the new Tragedy taken to pieces and examined scene by scene;" every one of which is greedily bought up, which is the point aimed at.

But the most curious secret of all, for an honest bookseller, is to take care to print, at the end of the book he publishes, all the abuse and ribaldry that has been written against the author. Nothing is better calculated to whet the curiosity of the reader, and to quicken the sale. I remember, among the execrable editions that have been printed in Holland of my pretended works, an artful editor of Amsterdam, who was desirous to sink the credit of an impression printed at the Hague, thought proper to add, by way of appendix, a collection of all the ribaldry he could scrape together that had been written against me. The first words of this collection called me a snarling cur. I found this book at Magdeburg, in the hands of the post-master, who never ceased telling me what an eloquent piece it was. Lately two worthy booksellers of Amsterdam, after having disfigured, as much as in them lay, the *Henriade*, and my other pieces, did me the honour to acquaint me by letter, that if I persisted in my intention of permitting a better edition of my works to be published at Dresden, than that  
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which they were then engaged in, they should hold themselves bound in conscience to publish against me a volume of the most atrocious calumnies, on the finest writing paper, with a large margin, and the most beautiful letter they could procure. They have been as good as their word with me. It is pity such valuable collections should have been buried in oblivion. Formerly, when there were eight or nine hundred thousand volumes fewer in Europe than at present, those pieces of scandal had their effect. People read with extreme relish in Scaliger, that cardinal Bellarmin was an atheist, the reverend father Clavius a drunkard, and that the reverend father Cotton had sold himself to the devil. These were happy days; but, alas! every thing degenerates.



## ON PRINTED LIES.

VERY little has been said on printed lies with which the world has been deluged: it would be no difficult matter to write a large volume on the subject; but we know we are not to do all that may be done. We shall here only give a few general rules, to caution mankind against that multitude of books, in which errors and falsities have been transmitted from age to age.

We are apt to start at the sight of a numerous library, and to exclaim, What a dismal thing is it to be condemned to remain ignorant of almost all

all it contains ! Do not be cast down : there is very little reason for sorrow in the case. Observe those four or five thousand volumes of the ancient metaphysical writers : they contain not a word of truth till the time of Galileo. Look into the histories of a multitude of nations ; their first ages are nothing but absurdities. After the fabulous times come those called heroical : the first are no better than the Persian Tales, where every thing is invention ; the second are of the same kind with our romances of knight-errantry, where nothing is true, except a few names, and two or three dates.

Here then are already many thousand years and volumes, in which there is nothing to be learned ; so that we rest perfectly satisfied as to that point. Next come the historical times, where the ground of the story is true, and most of the circumstances lies : but amongst all those lies, are there no truths ? Yes, much such a proportion as of gold dust in the sands of some rivers. Perhaps I shall here be asked, how this gold is to be found. In this manner. Whatever is neither consistent with physical nor rational truths, nor the temperament of the human mind, is nothing but sand : the rest, provided it has the concurrent testimony of the wise men of the age, is the gold dust you seek for.

Herodotus relates, to the whole body of the Greeks assembled, the history of the neighbouring nations : he is laughed at by all men of sense, when he talks of the predictions of Apollo, and the fables of Egypt and Assyria ; nor did he believe them himself. All that he relates on the credit of the Egyptian priests is false ; every thing which he speaks of, as an eye-witness, has been  
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confirmed since. We ought certainly to rely on what he says, when he tells his Grecian auditors, "There is among the treasures of the Corinthians a golden lion, weighing three hundred and sixty pounds weight, which is a present made them by Cræsus: in the same place likewise we are shewn two tuns, the one of silver, and the other of gold, which he presented to the temple of Delphos: that of gold weighs about five hundred pounds, and that of silver contains about two thousand four hundred pints." However extraordinary this magnificence may appear to us, and however superior it may seem to any thing we are acquainted with, it cannot be called in question. Herodotus speaks to a matter of fact, of which there were upwards of an hundred thousand witnesses. This fact is very important on another account, as it proves to us, that in the Lesser Asia, in the time of Cræsus, there was a greater magnificence than we see at present; and this magnificence, which can only be the fruit of a great number of ages, proves a very high antiquity, whereof there remain not at present the smallest traces. The prodigious monuments which Herodotus saw in Egypt, and at Babylon; are moreover incontestable facts.

The case is not the same with regard to solemnities, instituted to celebrate an event: most false reasoners tell us, here is a ceremony instituted from time immemorial, therefore the event so celebrated must certainly be true; but yet philosophers will often reverse the argument, and say, therefore that event never had existence.

The Greeks celebrated the Pythean games, in memory of the serpent Python, which Apollo assuredly never slew: the Egyptians celebrated the

the admission of Hercules into the number of the twelve great gods; yet there is no likelihood that this Hercules of Egypt existed seventeen thousand years before the reign of Amasis, as was asserted in the hymns sung to his honour. Greece assigned nine stars in the heavens to the dolphin which carried Arion on its back. The Romans celebrated this pretty adventure in February. The Salian priests carried in procession, on the first of March, the sacred bucklers that fell from heaven, when Numa, having bound Faunus and Picus, learned from them the secret of turning aside the force of thunderbolts. In short, there never was a people who have not solemnized, by ceremonies, the most absurd imaginations.

As for the manners of the barbarous nations, whatever a sensible and ocular witness shall relate concerning them, be it ever so ridiculous, so infamous, so superstitious or abominable, I shall be very inclinable to believe it of human nature. Herodotus affirms, before all Greece, that the inhabitants of those immense countries, lying beyond the Danube, prided themselves in drinking the blood of their enemies out of human skulls, and in cloathing themselves in their skins. The Greeks, who carried on a commerce with these barbarians, might have detected Herodotus, had he been guilty of exaggeration. It is certain, that upwards of three fourths of the inhabitants of the globe have lived for a long time like wild beasts: they are born such. They are so many baboons who are taught to dance, and so many bears chained up by the mere force of education. That which the czar Peter found necessary to do in part of his dominions is a proof



of what I advance, and renders all that Herodotus relates extremely credible.

After Herodotus, the substance of history becomes much more true, and the facts more circumstantial; but very often we meet with as many lies as there are circumstances. Can I believe the historian Josephus, when he tells me that the smallest town in Galilee contained fifteen thousand inhabitants? By no means. I cannot help declaring that he has exaggerated: he thought he should do his country honour by so bold an assertion, instead of which he has degraded it in the eyes of mankind. What a shame was it for the Jewish people, if they were really so numerous, to suffer themselves to be so easily subdued by a handful of Romans!

Most historians resemble Homer; they sing of battles: but, of all this dreadful number of combats, there are not any, if we except the retreat of the ten thousand in Xenophon, the battle fought between Scipio and Hannibal at Zama, described by Polybius, and that of Pharsalia, related by the conqueror, capable of affording the reader the smallest instruction: every where else, I can see nothing but mankind cutting one another's throats, and nothing further †.

We may believe all the horrors to which princes have been driven by their ambition, with every act of folly which mankind have committed through superstition. But how could historians descend so low as to admit for supernatural

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† Let us add to this list, M. de Voltaire's description of the battle of Fontenoy, in which he has celebrated an English column, which existed nowhere but in his own imagination.

prodigies the tricks devised by conquerors, and adopted by the people?

The inhabitants of Algiers firmly believe their city to have been saved by a miracle, when Charles V. was coming to besiege it. They say that one of their saints struck the sea, and a storm arose which destroyed one half of the emperor's fleet.

How many of our historians have written as if they had been Algerines! How lavish have they been of their miracles against the Turks, and against heretics! They have often treated history as Homer has done the siege of Troy. They interest all the powers of heaven in the cause or defence of a city. But can men, who profess to tell truth, imagine that the Divine Being sides with one petty nation that is at war with another, full as inconsiderable, in some insignificant and remote corner of our hemisphere?

No one has a greater veneration for St. Francis Xavier than I have: he was a Spaniard, animated with the most intrepid zeal; he was the Ferdinando Cortez of religion. But I cannot help thinking the writers of his life should not have asserted so roundly, that this great man was in different places at the same time.

If any one has a right to pretend to the gift of working miracles, it is undoubtedly those who carry their charity and their doctrine to the extremities of the earth. I could have been glad, however, had their miracles been a little less frequent; that they had raised fewer of the dead; and that they had not so often baptized thousands of the Orientals in one day. It is glorious to preach the gospel in a foreign country the moment one sets foot in it. It is no small accom-

plishment instantly to speak with eloquence, and to move the passions, in a language that cannot be learned in many years, and which, after all, we are never able to pronounce, but in a ridiculous manner. These prodigies ought certainly to be husbanded; and the marvellous, when indiscreetly lavished, serves only to augment the number of unbelievers.

But it is in travellers, above all, we meet with the greatest number of printed lies. I pass over Paul Lucas, who saw the devil *Asmodeus* in the Upper Egypt. Neither shall I take notice of those who deceive us, even whilst they tell us the truth: they may have seen a very extraordinary thing in a country, and take it for a common custom; they may have met with some abuse, and imagine it to have been a law of the land. These authors are much like the German, who happening to have a small difference with his landlady at Blois, whose hair was somewhat inclinable to the sandy, put down in his pocket-book, "*Nota bene*, All the women in Blois are red-haired and scolds."

What is still worse is, that most of those who write on the subject of government, often draw false examples from mistaken travellers, with which they impose upon mankind. A Turkish emperor may perhaps have confiscated the treasure of certain bashaws, who were born slaves in his seraglio, and given such share as he thinks proper to the family of the deceased; therefore it must be a fundamental law in Turkey, that the Grand Turk is heir to all his subjects: he is a monarch, therefore he must be despotic, in the most horrible sense of the word, and in the manner most humiliating and disgraceful to humanity.

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The Turkish government, which does not allow the Emperor to absent himself any length of time from his capital, to change the laws, to touch the public revenue, &c. shall be represented as an establishment in which the prince may lawfully kill and plunder, from morn till night, every one he pleases. The Alcoran says, it is lawful to be married to four wives at the same time; therefore every private tradesman at Constantinople has four wives, as if it were so easy a matter either to have or maintain such a number. Some persons of rank have seraglios: from hence it is taken for granted, that every Mussulman is a Sardanapalus; and in this manner do we generally judge of things. A Turk who should have chanced to be at a certain capital, during the celebration of an *Auto de Fe*, would surely be mistaken, should he assert, that there is a civilized country where they sometimes solemnly burn a score of men, women, and children, for the amusement of their gracious majesties. Most relations are written in the same taste. The case is still worse when they happen to be filled with prodigies. In short, we ought to be as much upon our guard against what books tell us, as a judge is against the pleadings of the lawyers.

There is yet another great source of public errors amongst us, and which is peculiar to our nation: this is the taste for lampoons and abusive songs. These are sometimes made on the most respectable personages; and we hear the living and the dead slandered every day on such noble foundations as these: "It is an undoubted fact, say they, there is a song about it, which proves it beyond question."

Let us not forget to mention, amongst the number of printed lies, the rage of making al-

legories. On finding the fragments of Petronius, to which Nodot has since boldly added his own, all the learned took the consul Petronius for the author of this book. They plainly discover Nero, and all his court, in a company of young roguish scholars, who are the heroes of that work. They were then, and still are, deceived by the name: and that obscure and creeping debauchee who wrote this satire, which is more infamous than ingenious, must absolutely be the consul Petronius; that absurd old fellow Turkaret; that financier below Trimalcion himself, must be the young Nero; and that silly insignificant wife of his, the beautiful Acte; that clownish pedant Agamemnon, the philosopher Seneca. This is like seeking Louis XIV. and his whole court, in Gil Blas. But, some one will tell me, what advantage do you reap by undeceiving mankind in regard to those trifles? That I shall gain nothing is past all doubt; but we ought to accustom ourselves to search for truth even in minute things; for want of which habit, we are egregiously deceived in those of consequence.



## On PRINTED LIES.

*Reasons why we ought to believe that the book entitled, The Political Testament of Cardinal Richlieu is a spurious work.*

**M**Y zeal for the discovery of truth, my function as historiographer of France, which requires my applying to historical researches, my sentiments, which are those of a citizen;

citizen ; the respect I bear for the memory of the founder of a body of which I am a member ; my personal attachment to the heirs of his name and his merit ; these, I say, are my motives for endeavouring to undeceive those persons who attribute to cardinal Richlieu a work which I have good grounds to think neither is, nor can be his.

I. Even the title of it is suspicious ; a person who addresses his master, would never have given his to respectful counsels the pompous title of a *Political Testament*. Scarce was Richlieu dead, when an hundred different manuscripts were published for and against his memory. I have two of them under the title of *Testamentum Christianum*, and two more under that of *Testamentum Politicum*. These are probably what have given rise to all the Political Testaments that have been forged since.

II. Had a work, in which one of the greatest statesmen that Europe ever bred, is supposed to give his master an account of his administration, and to offer him his advice with respect both to the present and the future, had this work been actually wrote by this minister, he would certainly have taken all possible measures that such a monument should not perish ; he would have given the most authentic proofs of its being genuine ; he would have mentioned it in his real testament, in which his last requests were contained ; he would have bequeathed it to the king as a present infinitely more valuable than the cardinal-palace ; he would have given it in charge to his executors to transmit this important work to Louis XIII. The king must have mentioned it to some one ; all the memoirs of those times would have taken notice of an

anecdote of this importance: not a tittle of all this has happened. Such a general silence in an affair of so much weight, cannot fail of raising the strongest suspicions in the mind of every sensible person. Why did neither the original manuscript, nor any copy of it, appear in the space of so many years? It was known at the death of Cæsar, that he had written Commentaries: it was known that Cicero had written on eloquence; a manuscript of Raphael on painting could never have remained a profound secret.

III. Moreover, this work is no half-formed design, it has actually had the last hand put to it. It concludes with a fine peroration full of morality: *I beseech your majesty to betink yourself from this moment, of what Philip II. never thought, 'till he was ready to resign his breath; and to engage you to do so by example, as well as precept, I promise that not a day of my life shall pass, in which I will not endeavour to reflect on what ought to be my sentiments at the day of my death, with regard to public affairs. There is nothing wanting to render this work compleat; even the epistle dedicatory has been found, which they had the effrontery to sign in Holland, Armand du Plessis, although the cardinal never subscribed his name in that manner; not so much as the table of contents but has been recovered, which the editor is so audacious as to ascribe to the cardinal. Lastly, in this epistle dedicatory they make the cardinal address the king in the following words: This piece will one day appear under the title of Political Testament, that it may be of use after my death, &c.* As this piece was to see the light after he cardinal's death, it consequently ought

ought to have been presented to the king in the most solemn manner; the original, in like manner, ought to have been signed and witnessed; and lastly, the very date of the presentation of this important legacy, ought to have been recorded.

IV. Had this manuscript fallen into the hands of some minister of state on the death of Lewis XIII. and so had passed into those of the persons who from thence made it public, some circumstances of it ought certainly to have been known; the editor must have told by what means he had got possession of such a manuscript, which he would have declared with more boldness, as printing it in a free country, near forty years after the death of the cardinal, and when the remembrance of the hatred that had subsisted between the cardinal and certain great families, had entirely subsided. The editor, as I have already remarked in another place, was above all under the obligation to ascertain the authority of this manuscript, by neglecting of which he must acknowledge himself unworthy of all manner of credit. None of all these conditions, so indispensably necessary to establish the authenticity of a book of such a nature, have ever been fulfilled, and even for a space of four and twenty years complete, from the date of the pretended manuscript, neither the court nor city, nor any book, nor any journal, make the least mention of any such thing as the cardinal's having left the king a political testament.

V. How, indeed, was it possible, that Cardinal Richlieu, who as is well known, found greater difficulty in governing the king his master than in guiding the helm of state, should have ever had either leisure or inclination



to compose such a work for the use of Lewis XIII. ? The author of the New Chronological Abridgement of the History of France, who is so excellent at painting times and persons, confesses in his useful performance, that cardinal de Richlieu, *has had much cause to be afraid of the king, for whom he risked his all, as he had to dread the resentment of those whom he compelled to obey him*: disappointments, suspicions, and reciprocal discontents were daily carried to such a length between king and minister, that Cinqmars, Lewis's master of horse, proposed to his master to assassinate the cardinal de Richlieu as he had done the marshal d'Ancre, for which he promised his personal service ; this is asserted by Louis himself in a letter to chancellor Seguier, after the conspiracy of Cinqmars. The king therefore had given his favourite reason to think he might venture to make this strange proposal. In such a situation as this, it is impossible one should take the trouble to compose for a king, who was already arrived at years of maturity, in the midst of mutual apprehensions, a collection of precepts which an unoccupied father might possibly have bequeathed to a son still in his infancy ? I can hardly think such a conduct consistent with human nature. This reason will have no effect with one of the learned, but I am sure it will not fail to persuade such as have a proper knowledge of mankind.

VI. Let us suppose however, a man, such as cardinal Richlieu, to have really had an intention to give the king his master proper rules for government after his death, as he had given him whilst he was living ; what man is there, who, on opening this book, would not expect to see all the secrets of cardinal de Richlieu laid

open, and to find his Testament breathing the grandeur and boldness of his genius? who would not flatter himself with having the pleasure of discovering measures at once artful and daring, suitable to the then state of Europe, and of France, of the court, and above all, of the monarch? By the first chapter it is evident that the author pretends to write in 1640; for he make cardinal Richlieu in a barbarous jargon, speaking of the war with Spain, say, *It is in this war, which has lasted five years only, that you have met with any accident, &c.* for this was began in 1635, and the dauphin was born in 1638. How then comes it to pass, that in a political work, which enters into all the detail of privileged cases, of appeals in matters of abuse, of rights of indulto's, and of the venditions that prevail in the Mediterranean, the education of the presumptive heir of the crown should have been forgotten? This forger must surely be a very bungling fellow in his profession. The real cause of this omission is, that the author having in several other parts of his book forgotten he had made as if he had wrote in 1639 and 1640, afterwards takes it into his head to write as if he was then in 1635. He makes the reign of Lewis XIII. no more than five and twenty; whereas he should have made it thirty years, a palpable contradiction and an evident demonstration of an imposition which no art can palliate.

VII. Again, Lewis XIV. is engaged in a ruinous war with the house of Austria; his enemies are on the frontiers of Champagne and Picardy; and yet his first minister, who has promised him his counsels, does not mention a single word to him, neither of the manner which  
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this dangerous war was to be carried on, nor of the terms of peace to be agreed upon, nor of the generals or plenipotentiaries proper to be employed? Not one word of the conduct to be observed with respect to counsellor Oxenstiern, with respect to the army of the duke of Weimar, with respect to Savoy, Portugal and Catalonia! Nothing is to be met with in regard to the revolutions which the cardinal himself fomented in England; nothing of the Huguenot party, which still breathed a spirit of faction and vengeance. In all this I think I see a physician who when called to prescribe for a sick-man, entertains his patient with talking about every thing but what relates to his disorders.

VIII. The person who has vended these notions under the name of cardinal de Richlieu, first of all avails himself of the success of that great man in his ministry, in order to make him aver that he had promised the king his master this good fortune. The cardinal had humbled the grandees of the kingdom whose power was dangerous, the Huguenots who had the upper hand, and the house of Austria which was still more to be dreaded: hence he infers, that the cardinal had promised the king he would accomplish those revolutions the moment he set foot in the cabinet. These are the words he puts in the mouth of the cardinal. *When your majesty had formed the resolution not only to admit me to your councils, but even to a great share in your confidence, I promised you I would employ all the authority you should be pleased to invest me with, in order to destroy the Huguenot party, humble the grandees, reduce all your subjects to their duty, and raise your fame among st foreign nations, to that high rank it ought to hold, &c.* Now it is universally known, that when

when Louis XIII. gave his consent to the admission of cardinal de Richlieu into the council, he was far from being sensible of the good he had procured to France as well as to himself. It is an acknowledged truth, that the king, who then had a dislike to this great man, acted merely in compliance with the repeated intercessions of the queen-mother, who left no stone unturned to introduce her favourite, for whom she had lately procured a cardinal's hat, and whom she looked upon as her creature, and by whom she hoped to govern. She at length prevailed, and he was admitted into the council: nevertheless it was even found necessary to gain over the marquis de la Vieuville, superintendant of the finances, who consented with a good deal of difficulty to the cardinal's admission into the council in 1624: and he neither held the first place there, nor was in any great degree of credit. This whole year passed in jealousies, cabals, and secret factions; and the cardinal got the ascendant only by degrees, and as it were by stealth.

It will afford matter of satisfaction to some readers to learn in this place, that cardinal de Richlieu received his patent of first minister on the 21st of November 1629, and not before. Lewis XIII. signed it privately with his own hand. These letters patents are addressed by the king to the cardinal himself; and what is very remarkable is, that the appointments attached to that new dignity, are left blank in this instrument; the king leaving it to the magnificence and discretion of his minister, the care of taking out of the public treasury what was necessary to support the dignity of his station.

But to return, it is by no means probable the cardinal

cardinal should have expressed himself in 1624, in the manner they have made him do. It was certainly much for his honour to have atchieved so many great things; but it would have been extremely rash to have promised them: and it would have been the most ridiculous and indecent thing in nature, to have told the king his master, on his admission into his councils, *I will raise your fame*. They make him relate, contrary to his oath of secrecy, and against all decorum, what he had done: yet he says not a word of what ought to be done. Why? because the one was very easy, and the other extremely difficult.

IX. By the little we have now said, it already appears, that the pretended work in question is wholly inconsistent with the character of the minister to whom it is ascribed, of the king to whom it is addressed, and the time in which it is supposed to have been written; and, I will also add, with the stile of the cardinal. We need only examine five or six of his letters, to be able to judge that it is impossible this work should have been done by the same hand; and this proof would be sufficient to convince any one who is possessed of the least degree of taste or discernment. Moreover, cardinal de Richlieu, though he was sometimes under the necessity of doing violent things, never let any harsh or indecent expressions escape him. If he was daring in his actions, he was extremely circumspect in what he wrote: he would certainly never have called, in a political work, the marchioness du Fargis, one of the queen's ladies of the bed-chamber, plain Fargis. This would have been the highest want of good-breeding and respect both to the king and posterity, to whom he was addressing himself. This  
indecent

indecent expression is taken from a wretched book, printed in 1649, intituled, *The History of the Ministry of Cardinal de Richlieu*. The author of the *Testament* has copied this work of darkness, which has been more disgraced by the contempt of the public than by the arret by which it stands condemned.

Can any one be brought to believe, that a first minister, who supposes the peace with Spain already concluded, should speak of the Spaniards in such terms as these: "This covetous and insatiable nation, an enemy to the repose of Christendom?" He could not have spoken of Mahomet II. in worse terms. It is impossible to conceive, that a priest, a cardinal, a first minister, and a man of sense, writing to a wise king, and in a testament which ought to be exempt from passion, should have been so little master of himself (at the time of this supposed peace) as to let fall expressions he would not have used in a declaration of war.

X. Is it possible that a statesman, proposing to write a work which required so much solidity, should say, "That the king of Spain, by assisting the Huguenots, had laid the Indies under contribution to hell; that courtiers measure the diadem by its form, which, as it is round, has no end; that the elements have no weight, but when they are in their proper places; that neither fire, air, nor water, are capable of supporting a terrestrial body, because such a body gravitates even when out of its place;" with an hundred other absurdities of the same sort, worthy of a country professor of rhetoric of the sixteenth century, or of an Irish pedagogue disputing upon a stool.

XI. Is there again any great probability, that

cardinal de Richlieu, so well known for his gallantries, not to say for the over-warmth of his desires, should recommend the virtue of chastity to Lewis XIII. a prince chaste from constitution, by conscience, and by infirmity.

XII. After such strong presumptions, what man of sense can resist that glaring proof of falsehood to be found in the first chapter? I mean the supposition that the peace was already concluded. You are now come, says he, to the conclusion of a peace: your majesty entered into the war wholly,—&c.—and have extricated yourself out of it only, &c. . . . An impostor, in the hurry of his forgery, forgetting the times of which he speaks, might well fall into so gross an absurdity; but a first minister, when he is actually at war, would certainly not have said the war is concluded. The war against the house of Austria was carried on more briskly than ever, although all the princes of Europe were then in negotiation; and perhaps for that very reason. It is true, in 1641, there were some foundations laid of the treaties of Munster, which were not concluded till 1648; and the author of the Testament makes cardinal de Richlieu speak sometimes in 1640, and sometimes in 1635. The cardinal could neither have supposed the peace made in the middle of the war, nor fly out into the most atrocious invectives against the Spaniards at a time when he was desirous to enter into a treaty with them.

XIII. Can there be any necessity to add to this evident proof of a palpable imposture, a mistake not quite so absurd indeed, but which, notwithstanding, serves equally well to detect an ignorant liar? He makes a prime minister, as the cardinal

cardinal was, say, in the same chapter, "that the king refused the assistance of the Ottoman arms against the house of Austria." If he means the assistance which the Turks were desirous of giving to the French, the fact itself is false, and the very supposing of it ridiculous; if he means a diversion to be made by the Turks in Hungary, or elsewhere, any man who knows the world, or has the smallest idea of cardinal Richlieu, well knows that such offers are seldom refused.

XIV. As it appears, from the first chapter, that the impostor wrote after the peace of the Pyrenees, of which his imagination was full, it appears, by the second, that he wrote after the reformation which Lewis XIV. made in every part of the administration. "I remember to have seen in my youth, says he, gentlemen and other lay persons possessed, in trust, not only of the greatest part of the priories and abbeys, but also of curacies and bishoprics. At present these trusts are much rarer than the lawful possessions were in those days." Now it is certain, that in the latter part of the cardinal's administration, nothing was more common than to see laymen possessed of benefices. He himself was the cause of five abbeys being given to the count de Soissons, who was killed at La Marfée; M. de Guise was possessed of eleven; the duke de Verneuil had the bishopric of Metz; the prince de Conti had the abbey of St. Dennis in 1641; the duke de Nemours had the abbey of St. Remi of Reims; the marquis de Treville that of Moutier-Ender, under the name of his son; in a word, the keeper of the seals Chateaufort was in possession of several abbeys till his death, which happened in 1643; so that we may judge whether this example



example was followed. The number of laymen who enjoyed those revenues of the state is almost infinite. It is sufficient to look into the Memoirs of the Count de Grammont to have an idea of the manner in which benefices were then obtained. I do not enquire whether the practice of giving away the revenues of the church to secular persons was good or evil; but I say, that a dextrous impostor would never have made cardinal de Richlieu mention a thing which had no existence at the time he was writing.

XV. In the same second chapter, this projector, who is assuredly some churchman, overflowing with zeal for the pretended rights of the clergy, and altogether as regardless of those of the crown, declaims against the right of the Regale. He forgot, that in 1637, and in 1638, cardinal de Richelieu had caused several arrêts of council to be passed, by which every bishop who should deem himself exempt from that right, was obliged to send into chancery the titles on which he grounded his pretensions. This writer knew not that a bishop who, was minister of state, interests himself more in favour of the rights of the crown, than of that of ecclesiastical pretensions. One should know the character of a first minister to be able to make him speak consistently. This is an ass who cloaths himself in the lion's hide, but who is easily found out by the enormous length of his ears.

XVI. This ignorant forger, in the chapter before us, where he entertains the king with a discourse about universities and colleges, instead of talking to him about his interests, expresses himself in his clownish stile (section X.) thus: "The history of Benedict XI, against whom the Cordeliers, who were piqued on account of the  
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the perfection of poverty; to wit, of the revenues of St. Francis, were exasperated to such a degree, that not only they waged open war with him by their writings, but also by the arms of the emperor, under the shadow of whose wings arose an antelope, to the great prejudice of the church, is too strong an example to be under any necessity to alledge any more." Certainly cardinal Richlieu, who was very learned, was not ignorant that this adventure, of which this impostor speaks, happened to pope John XXII. and not to pope Benedict XI. There is not a fact in all the ecclesiastical history better known than this; the ridiculousness of it has rendered it famous; the cardinal could not possibly have been mistaken in it: besides, to inform a king of the great danger arising from religious quarrels, there were an hundred more striking examples to have been quoted.

XVII. In the same, section X. chapter II. speaking of the Jesuits: "This order, says he, which has submitted, by a blind vow of obedience, to a perpetual head, cannot, according to the laws of good policy, be much favoured in a state to which any powerful community might appear dangerous." I know well this stroke is somewhat softened a few lines after; but, to be plain, is it possible cardinal de Richelieu should have thought the Jesuits dangerous, a set of people whom he used only for his purpose, and punished at his will? he who feared neither the queen, nor the princes, nor the house of Austria, could he be supposed to stand in awe of a few monks? He had even banished several of the order, as likewise some fathers of the oratory, and other priests, that had been concerned in cabals; but neither he

nor the state had any thing to fear from those communities. It had certainly been very extraordinary, that the conqueror of Rochelle should in his testament have been more distrustful of the Jesuits than of the Hugonots. This reflection is no convincing proof, but, joined to others, it serves to shew that the author, though he usurped the name of a first minister, was yet incapable of assuming his spirit.

XVIII. Were it necessary to confute all the mistakes with which this performance swarms, I should make a volume as large as the Political Testament, a work which knavery has compiled; which ignorance, prepossession, and respect for a great name, have caused to be admired; which the patience of the reader can scarce endure to read; and which had remained absolutely unknown, had it appeared under the name of its real author. I have already, in a small work, pointed out some of these proofs, which serve to demonstrate the imposture to any one possessed of the least judgment or taste. The following, among the rest, is unanswerable. The author, who is fond, however unseasonably, of making a parade, equally useless and false, of his knowledge in the history of the affairs of the church, of commerce, and of the marine, takes it into his head in chapter IX. section VI. to talk thus with regard to the settlements in the Indies: "As for the West-Indies, we know there is very little trade carried on there: Drake, Thomas Cavendish, Herberg, l'Hermite, Lemaire, and the late count Maurice, who sent twelve ships thither with design to carry on a trade either by force or friendship, not being able to find any place proper to make a settlement." Remark, I beseech you,

at what time the impostor makes cardinal Richelieu speak in this manner. It is in 1640, at the very time when the late count Maurice, who was then actually living, governed the Brazils in the name of the United Provinces, and that the Dutch West-India company had been making a very considerable progress from the year 1662, without the smallest interruption: observe also how, in the beginning of the same section VI. the author confesses, "that the Dutch give no small trouble to the Spaniards in the West-Indies, where they are in possession of the greatest part of Brazil." And, indeed, is it possible to lay to the door of a statesman such a hodge-podge of errors and contradictions? England, of which he speaks, had already immense countries in America. As to Drake and Thomas Cavendish, their example is very unseasonably quoted: they were not sent to make settlements, but to ruin those of the Spaniards, to disturb their trade, and to make prizes, in all which they succeeded.

XIX. Any person inclined to take the trouble of reading the Political Testament with attention, would be greatly surprized to see that in fact this book is rather a criticism on the administration of the cardinal, than an exposition of his conduct, and a connected account of his principles; the whole of it turns on two points, the first of which is unworthy of him, and the second an insult on his memory.

The first object is a vague, puerile, commonplace, a catechism for a prince of ten years old, and most egregiously ill adapted to a prince in his fortieth year; such are the following chapters: "That the foundation of the happiness of a state is the reign of godliness; that reason

reason ought to be the rule of human conduct; that the interest of the public ought to be preferred to that of individuals; that foresight is a necessary quality; that every person in the state ought to be invested with that employ for which he is qualified; that it is very necessary to keep flatterers, informers, and plotters, at a distance;" with twenty other discoveries, equally profound, accompanied with a piece of advice which would have been an insult to so enlightened a prince as Lewis XIII. who might, with great justice, have answered his minister and servant, "Talk in this manner to my young son, but know better the respect due to your master."

The second point, which makes the principal part of his ninth chapter, turns on ministerial projects, which are all of the author's own invention; and every one of them the direct reverse of those followed in the cardinal's administration. The author takes it into his head to abolish the private money edicts, or, out of his great condescension, to fix them at a million of gold. These edicts are for issuing private sums for secret services, of which no account is given. This is the most valuable privilege attached to the place of prime minister. No one but an enemy would demand its abolition.

XX. The ninth chapter of the Political Testament bears in each page of it the most evident proofs of a forgery; the most wretchedly executed that can be imagined; here reflections, facts, computations, and every thing else, is equally false: in this place the author advances, that for every new tax imposed, the minister is obliged in justice to augment the pay of the soldiery;

diery ; which, however, has never happened either under Lewis XIII. or Lewis XIV. here, too, whilst he eases the shoulders of the people of seventeen millions of the taille, he carries the king's revenue all at once to fifty-seven millions, which he supposes commonly to amount to no more than thirty-five ; which is a further proof of his ignorance, for the taille alone commonly amounted to thirty-five millions, the farms to eleven, &c. In this likewise he proposes to reimburse the annuities created by the cardinal, whereof several were at the twentieth penny, which he rates at the fifth penny ; to take from the treasurers of France two thirds of their salaries ; to cause the parliaments, chambers of accounts, the grand council, all the courts which he calls sovereign, to pay their share of the taille, whilst he classes them at the same time with the peasants. Would it not have been extremely becoming in cardinal de Richelieu to propose so wild and extravagant a measure, in order to vilify a body of which he had the honour to be a member by his quality of peer of France, a dignity which he held in equal value with his rank as cardinal !

XXI. With respect to the war, it has been already observed, that he has not so much as mentioned that in which the kingdom was then engaged. But in his vague, general, and chimerical reflections, he recommends the taxing all the fees of gentlemen, to enrol the noblesse, and to keep them in pay ; he would have every gentleman compelled to serve at the age of five and twenty ; he would have none of the roturier, or lower class, admitted into the cavalry till five and twenty ; that the care of provisions should be committed only to persons of quality ;

quality; that, when there was a necessity to raise fifty soldiers, they should raise an hundred; and this for no other reason that can be discovered, but to double their cloathing and enlisting-money. What a project this for a minister! It is true, the notion of enrolling the nobles, and causing the parliament to pay the taille, might have been the offspring of a better head than that of a projector, who, being out of employment, takes it into his head to govern Europe. In the same ninth chapter, he likewise treats of the affairs relating to the marine: he speaks very learnedly of the great dangers of the navigation between Spain and Italy, and between Italy and Spain, equally chimerical with that of Scylla and Charydis: he pretends that the single province of Provence has a much greater number of sea-ports, better as well as safer, than those of Spain and Italy put together; an hyperbole capable to persuade one, that this book was the work of some Provençal, that had never seen any place but Toulon and Marseilles, rather than a statesman acquainted with the situation of all Europe.

These are part of those chimeras which this clandestine politician has published in the name of that great minister, with an hundred times less discernment than the Abbe de St. Pierre has shewn, in ascribing a part of his political ideas to the duke of Burgundy.

The project relating to the finances, which takes up almost the whole of the last chapter, is taken from a manuscript still in being. I have seen it: it was written in 1640. This piece makes the king's revenues amount to fifty-nine millions of those times, by the arrangement which it proposes. The author of the Testa-  
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ment subtracts two of these; in every thing else they perfectly agree. Nothing is so common as projects of this sort; sometimes the ministers receive such, but very seldom read any of them. The forger, whilst he copied those ideas, makes it very clearly appear, that he never was at the pains to acquaint himself properly with the state of the finances of Lewis XIII. He boldly advances, that each of the five years war had lost no more than sixty millions and nine hundred thousand livres. It is, likewise, false that this expence was paid without extraordinary means: there were a great many taxations, a great many augmentations of salaries, which were brought into the finances; the duties were augmented in the provinces; a tax of a crown *per ton* was laid on wine; the *taille*, which amounted to thirty-six millions and two hundred thousand livres, was carried to thirty-eight millions and nine hundred thousand livres. In a word, most of the things related in this book are as wide of the truth as the propositions in it are extraordinary.

XXII. It will, no doubt, be asked, how it was possible the public should have passed such an affront on the memory of cardinal de Richelieu, as to imagine this book worthy of him? I answer, men seldom reflect; read with very little attention; judge with precipitation, and receive opinions as they do money, because they are current.

XXIII. If it be objected to me, that father le Long and others have thought this book the work of the cardinal, I will acknowledge that father le Long has very accurately compiled about thirty thousand titles of books, and will add, that for that very reason he had no time to examine the books themselves: but above



all, I will answer, that had we as many authorities as father le Long has composed titles, they would not be able to counterballance one solid reason. If, however, the weakness of men must needs rest their belief on authorities, I will oppose to father le Long and others, Aubery, who has written the life of cardinal Mazarine, Ancillon, Richard, the writer who took the title of Vigneul de Morville, and lastly le Monnoie, one of the most enlightened critics of the last age; all of these pronounced the Political Testament spurious.

XXIV. But, say they, in 1664 the Abbe des Roches, formerly a domestic of the cardinal de Richelieu, gave his library to the Sorbonne, after the example of his master; and in this library there was found a manuscript of the Testament, which tallied exactly with the printed copy, together with the same epistle dedicatory, and the same table of contents. It is this very manuscript, so transmitted to the Sorbonne, which finishes the proof of this forgery. It is transmitted two and twenty years after the death of the cardinal, without any document or information from the Abbe des Roches. This work was thrown by for a time both by the servant of the cardinal, and even the Sorbonne itself, and it is within these two years it has been classed among the rest. Had this manuscript been copied from the original, it had been more respected, some marks of its authority would have been discovered, the signature of the cardinal de Richelieu would have been found at the end of the letter to the king. But no such signature is to be seen. They who composed it had not the effrontery; they did not dare to sign that name. Had the cardinal left ever so few memoirs, and had they had the smallest, and even

even the most distant relation to the Testament, some mention would have been made of them, and then some degree of credit might have been given to the boldness of him who imputed the whole of this work to the minister. This is by no means the case: there is not a single word, either at the beginning or end of this manuscript, from whence the smallest inference can be drawn. Therefore the Abbe des Roches must have looked upon this manuscript with the same indifference with which it has been regarded in the Sorbonne.

Let us imagine for a moment the Testament to be really the work of the cardinal; the single word testament supposes an indispensable duty in this domestic to ascertain the genuineness of the copy, and to declare its being juridically compared and collated with the original. If he has failed in this, he is certainly culpable; he gives the world a right to accuse him of forgery. But the Abbe des Roches had this manuscript in his possession just as any other person of curiosity might have had. This manuscript must certainly have been written before it was printed; and even, to favour the design of the imposture, several manuscript copies of it must have been made, which ought to have been handed about in a very private manner, as a monument of singular curiosity. Farther, the silence of this domestic proves the master not to have been the author of this testament, as all the other arguments are a solid proof he never could have been its author.

XXV. But it is said, that it has been affirmed about seventy years ago, that the duchess d'Aiguillon should have said fourscore years since, she had once had a manuscript copy of this testament. An original note of M. Huet has been  
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found; which note says, that somebody had seen this manuscript in the possession of the dukes d'Aiguillon, niece to the cardinal. Are not these very fine proofs? Most assuredly. I can easily believe, that all those who interest themselves in behalf of the cardinal's memory would have been glad to have had any manuscript that bore his name; and from this circumstance, I conclude that this manuscript was evidently supposititious, since among all the relations, all the domestics, all the friends of that minister, no one has ever given himself the smallest trouble in order to ascertain the authenticity of this performance.

XXVI. Let human curiosity weary itself in idle enquiries after the name of the forger; I, for my part, do not chuse to trifle away my time in such a manner. What imports it to know the name of the cheat now the imposture is discovered? what imports it to know that Courtils, or some other, forged the testaments of Mazarine, Colbert, and de Louvois? what imports it whether it were Stratman or Chevre-mont, that insolently usurped the name of Charles V. duke of Lorraine? does it entitle a man to fame, to have been the author of an execrable book? what advantage should one reap by knowing the authors of all the low calumnies and impertinent criticisms with which the public is overwhelmed? we ought to leave those authors who cover themselves under some great name in their own obscurity, in the same manner as we do those who every day attack what is most praise-worthy, and commend what is most execrable; they make the profession of letters as base and contemptible as themselves.

